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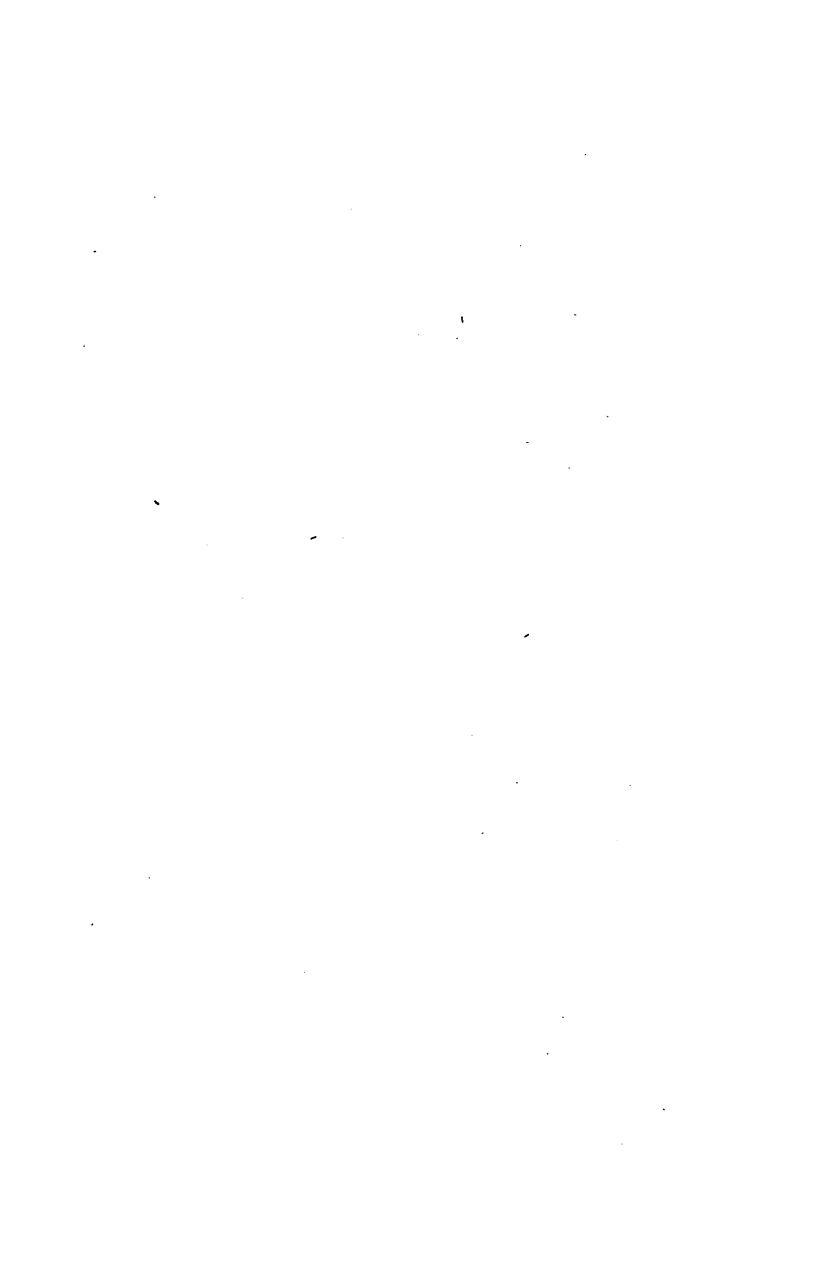
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THE
SIMPLE FLOWER.

AND OTHER TALES.

BY

Tonna or
CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH. [*pen name*]

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THE
SIMPLE FLOWER.

"THESE sweet little flowers thrive every where," said Emma, as she walked with her mother through the pleasure grounds of their beautiful residence, and stopped to admire the modest heart's-ease peeping out from the long grass on a shady bank.

WOR 19 FEB 36

"They do indeed my dear," replied her mamma; "and they furnish us with a lovely emblem of that contentment which with godliness is great gain, which knows how to abound and how to suffer need; and can glorify the Giver of all good under the most afflictive dispensations."

Mrs. Merton said this with much feeling, and Emma heard her sigh as she concluded: she

would have sighed also if she had known that they were about to leave the pleasant scenes of her childhood, and to exchange the wealth to which they had long been accustomed, for an income just sufficient to support them above actual want.

Of this Emma was still ignorant, and she went on praising her favourite flower.

"See, mamma, how simple and pretty it looks in this retired spot, as much at home among the grass and moss as a daisy would be : and yet how elegant it appears in the flower garden yonder, bordering the beds, and sprinkled up and down, where the gay blossoms grow, with its colours of blue and gold, as bright as the fairest among them. Oh, it thrives every where !"

"Yes Emma, it will flourish in every soil, rich and poor ; and it will adorn every station, high and low ; it bears transplanting well, and endures the change of seasons better than any flower I am acquainted with. So that, if plants were capable of reason, and acted from its dictates, we might say this little shrub fairly merited the partiality with which you regard it."

Emma was delighted to hear her choice commended by her dear mamma ; she gathered one of the blossoms, and kissing it with great affection, tripped along, exclaiming " Oh my pretty Heart's-ease, how I do love you ! "

The next morning Emma appeared at breakfast with a great number of these flowers, and said to her mother, " I have been trying to find two of them marked exactly alike, but I cannot—I discover some little variety in every one, that seems to distinguish it from its fellows. Is not that odd mamma ? "

" Not more strange, my dear, than the difference that you see in the faces of your acquaintance. There are many hundred millions of human countenances in the world, and probably not two among them that perfectly resemble each other. "

" Well, " said Emma " that brings my flower nearer to ourselves in its character, and I am determined to rank it first and best among all the flowers of the garden. "

" Take care you do not become too partial. Emma, " replied her mamma, smiling ; " be -

must confess it has often struck me, that among plants the Heart's-ease is what the children of God are among mankind."

"I think so to," said Emma, "for the children of God are humble, and lowly, contented, and beautiful."

"In their lives and characters certainly beautiful," continued Mrs. Merton; "and their works done in faith and humility, with their sacrifices of praise, when presented through the Saviour's mediation, ascend as a sweet-smelling incense before the Lord."

"Mamma," exclaimed Emma earnestly, "I wish to be like the Heart's-ease."

"It is my prayer that you may be what we are describing, my child, but without the especial grace of God you cannot become so."

"In some things, mamma, I am even now a little like—for instance I am very contented."

"Have you met with any temptation to be otherwise, my dear?"

"Oh yes, very often. I have suffered a great many disappointments. It sometimes rains hard when I have set my whole heart upon going out.



and I see several things that I should like very much to have, but cannot get them ;—besides you know my Canary bird died last spring, and my little puppy was lost, and the gardener pulled up my moss rose-tree. Then when my new bonnet came home, what an ugly shape it had ! and I must wear it all the summer and autumn.

“I assure you, mamma, if I did not look on the best side of every thing, and try to be very contented, I should be a most unhappy little girl—that is, I don’t mean to praise myself”—seeing her mother look grave—“nor to complain, as if mine was a hard case ; but I am quite sure from my bearing small troubles so well, that I could be very resigned under greater misfortunes.”

“I hope we shall both have the grace of resignation imparted to us, Emma, since we are about to suffer adversity.”

“Adversity, mamma ! *you* suffer adversity ! Oh I hope not indeed”—and she ran to her mother, and looked up in her face with great anxiety. Mrs. Merton kissed her affectionately and said, “We shall yet have much to be very

thankful for Emma, food and raiment, and a comfortable shelter: but the mercantile house to which the chief part of my fortune was entrusted has failed, and we must leave this abode, dismiss our servants, and retire to a very humble cottage, such as the widow Smith lives in. Can you bear transplanting like the Heart's-ease Emma?"

The little girl was too much confused by this unexpected intelligence, to give any answer. She looked around her at the pleasant room in which she had so long been happy; stole a glance through the window at the garden, then turned her eyes upon her mother, and began to cry.

"Those tears are natural," said Mrs. Merton, "but we must not indulge in selfish grief. I have a painful task before me, to break these tidings to my household, who have served me so faithfully, and who must now earn bread elsewhere. Come Emma, we will first seek for comfort where alone it is to be found; in all miseries and distress, it is the best wisdom to go to that friend who is most near, most willing, and most able to help us; such a friend is God: and

then in the strength that will be given us from above, we will make the necessary preparations for leaving this sweet home. Experience will teach us this great truth, that the grace of an Almighty Saviour alone can triumph over all troubles, and disappointments, and adversities, and when human expectations and human aids are at their lowest ebb, can roll in a tide of joy which shall never retire or fail throughout eternity."

They went to Mrs. Merton's dressing room, and there they prayed that He who had taught them to serve Him in prosperity, would keep them patient and cheerful in adversity, and cause all things to work together for good to them. The servants were then informed of the change in their lady's circumstances, thanked for their fidelity, and advised to seek other situations. Emma stood by her mother's side with downcast eyes, and a full heart, while each of the domestics in turn received the thanks and admonitions of a mistress, who in her conduct towards them had never forgotten that she likewise had a Master in heaven: and had rendered to them what

was just and equal, caring for their souls, and watching over their conduct as every real Christian master or mistress will do towards all who are brought under their direction.

By giving up the house immediately Mrs. Merton was enabled to oblige the person into whose hands it came ; and having no establishment of his own, he was glad to continue the servants in it ; so that Emma and her mamma, and one young girl, an orphan, who was kept to do the work of the cottage to which they were going, prepared to leave the house in three or four days.

Sad days these were to poor Emma—she struggled hard to appear cheerful in her mother's presence, from a dread of adding to her trials ; but whenever she could escape to the pleasure grounds, she wandered about, indulging herself in the most extravagant regret, and suffering melancholy to overpower her mind : she did not pray to be delivered from over-much sorrow ; she did not reflect that the sorrow of the world worketh death ; but finding a sort of pleasure in being extremely miserable, without considering that it

was a reproach to Him who had permitted this distress to come upon her family, she roamed about, taking a long leave of every spot, and increasing her regret, while her mother was seeking in prayer to have her affections more entirely drawn from things on earth, and more steadily set on things above. Emma thought her grief very natural, and the indulgence of it quite innocent; but our corrupt nature requires to be watched, and its inclinations often checked: while nothing is really innocent that unfits us for the performance of our daily duties, or makes it to appear that the dealings of God towards us are hard and severe.

By a strange contradiction, the more Emma differed from her favourite flower, the more she loved and mourned over it. She employed herself in carrying roots of it to every spot where it had not yet fixed itself, and in this foolish occupation, wasted many hours that might have been devoted to consoling her poor mother, and to improving this afflictive trial to her own advantage. "It is only for a few days," thought Emma, but in these few days she acquired a taste for idling,

that weeks and months of application could scarcely overcome.

At length the day arrived when they were to bid farewell to this spot; and very early in the morning both mother and daughter took a last survey of the garden and shrubbery. Neither was inclined to speak. Emma carefully dug up several roots of Heart's-ease and deposited them in her little basket, among moss and grass, for the purpose of adorning her new abode. At last they turned into the walk that led from their grounds across a meadow, by which they could gain the house in a different direction. Here Emma abruptly broke silence—"Mamma, shall we never, never come back?"

"I shall come back my dear, probably before you," replied her mamma in a low voice, and looking towards the burying ground, which was at a short distance from whence they stood.

"Oh! mamma, do let us go to the church-yard," cried Emma, hardly knowing why she wished it, yet feeling as if it would be a relief to her mother, and herself also.

To the church-yard they went; and bent their

steps to the spot where Emma's father lay. A tomb covered his remains, which was railed in, and the long grass rose around it, and inserted itself between the iron bars. There were rose trees too, growing from little slips, that Mrs. Merton had set there two years before; and a tall yew tree, hanging its dark boughs over the tomb, gave a solemn and a beautiful effect to the scene.

Emma felt composed by it, but lamented her selfish indulgence when she heard the deep sobs bursting from the bosom of her mother, to whom this spot was dearer than all that the house and garden contained; and she set herself to repair the mischief that she seemed to have done, by speaking comfort to her mother in her way.

"Mamma, we ought to be very thankful even for the poor cottage we are going to, when we think what a small, dark, lonely dwelling papa has got here."

"My love, we should be thankful for every thing, since all is mercy far above our deserts; but I should be sorry indeed to consider this as your papa's dwelling."

“Why is he not shut up there?”

“The earthly tabernacle of his body is mouldering there, my Emma; but he himself is now clothed with immortality and dwelling in a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ‘Better is the day of death than the day of one’s birth,’ is the word of scripture. Better every way. With our birth begin our sufferings: our death ends them: our birth enters the best of men into a world, a wilderness: our death enters the good into a world of glory.”

“And we know that he is in heaven, because he was so good,” added Emma.

“We know that he is in heaven,” replied her mother, “because the Lord Jesus Christ has said, ‘He that believeth in me hath everlasting life.’ ‘Though he were dead yet shall he live.’ We are well assured that your father’s whole trust was placed in Him, who is the resurrection and the life: and far, indeed, he was from accounting himself good, or resting any hope whatever on his own merits.”

"But he was good, notwithstanding," said Emma.

"He was a faithful and a zealous servant of his heavenly Master, my child; he was the tenderest, the best of husbands, and fathers: he was meek and lowly, yet firm and undaunted in the cause of truth: never shrinking from a bold confession of his faith in his crucified Redeemer, nor abashed by the scorn of those who despised the holy name that he professed; he was a Christian, Emma, in the fullest sense of the word."

"Yet, mamma, you seem to think he was not good enough to go to heaven."

"I will tell you," replied Mrs. Merton, "what I heard him say to his sister who came to see him in his last illness, and who judged as you do. She beheld his perfect composure, witnessed his declaration of the happiness that he felt in the prospect of soon seeing his Saviour face to face; and remarked to him, I always said that your death would be a happy one, Francis, because you have lived so good a life, and done your duty in every station so well.

Your papa raised his head and replied, ' Anne if I had no better hope before me than what the review of my conduct affords, I should say to the rocks fall on me ; and to the hills cover me. I am a guilty and polluted creature, born in sin, and sinning daily. If I look to the perfect law of God, and then to my own heart, and life, I must cry, ' woe is me for I am undone ! But I have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for my sins. His merits, His sufferings, His blood, His promises, are what I desire to plead : and feeling that I do rest on Him entirely, as the rock of my salvation, I can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The hope to which I have fled for refuge is that set before us in the Gospel : and that hope I have, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. On Christ is all my dependence ; *and trusting in Him I can never be ashamed.' "

" Ah ; " said Emma, with a sigh, " I wish I understood these things better ! "

" God can reveal them to you, my dear : but you must diligently use the means appointed by

Him, and by prayer and watchfulness render the study of His word effectual to your improvement. We must depart, Emma : and let the visit we have paid here dwell upon our minds, to moderate the painful feelings which we may experience to-day ; for while looking forward to this lowly resting place for our bodies, and to an eternal inheritance of heavenly glory for our souls, it will seem a light thing to exchange one earthly abode for another. Trials and afflictions we must expect, in common with all our sinful race ; as a good bishop has expressed it, " Every man hath his turn of sorrow : whereby, some more, some less, all men are in their times miserable. I never yet could meet with the man, that complained not of somewhat. Before sorrow come, I will prepare for it ; when it is come, I will welcome it : when it goes, I will take but half a farewell of it ; as still expecting its return.' "

Mrs. Merton slowly walked away : Emma lingered, hastily took a few roots of her plant from the basket, and committed them to the ground, as near the iron railing as she could ;

then hastened after her mother, and in a few hours left the home of her infancy.

It was late before they reached their new abode. Emma had no inclination to examine it closely ; there was a little bare looking garden behind it, in which she set her plants, and then, fatigued and dissatisfied, retired to rest.

In the morning her new situation was felt more keenly. Instead of the elegant hangings and damask curtains that adorned her former bed-chamber, she awoke to gaze upon walls simply coloured with a blue wash, and plain white dimity window blinds. She had pictured to herself such a cottage as she had seen near her father's grounds, half hid by stately trees, and covered with jessamine and honeysuckle ; but this was a new building, and very little vegetation as yet appeared about it. The garden was small, unsheltered, and principally stocked with useful herbs and roots, and a few young currant and gooseberry trees. The country around was flat and uninteresting, and as far as Emma could perceive from her window, did not even afford a pleasant shady walk. She con

tinued leaning sullenly out at the little casement, until the kind voice of her mamma from the next room, called her from her meditation.

They joined in prayer as usual, but Emma's mind was listless and not disposed for devotion. She did not feel the thankfulness that her mother poured forth for the blessings yet spared to them; and though she thought it likely that the correction might be for their good, as her mamma acknowledged it to be; yet she would rather have been without it; and all those rebellious feelings dwelt unchecked upon her thoughts, while kneeling before the throne of Him who has said, "I know the things that come into your minds, every one of them."

Emma went down stairs, and in the parlour she found a few geraniums and other plants, which her mother had brought as a relic of their former home: but they only served to remind Emma of the green-house, the parterre, the lawn, the shrubbery, and the thousand sweet flowers that she was to see no more. She turned from them to the breakfast table, and secretly drew a mortifying comparison between the china service

which she was accustomed to use, and the plain cottage furniture before her. All seemed wrong ; and in the selfish regret of her own heart, she felt not for her poor mother, whose change of circumstances must have pressed more heavily on her, from witnessing the very bad grace with which they were met by her little girl. All was silence, until Mrs. Merton, seeing a poor, crippled child, slowly passing by the garden rails, pointed her out to Emma, who first looked, and then peevishly said, "I suppose we shall be treated with the sight of such objects every day : we must have blinds to this little ugly window."

"The sight of such objects, Emma," replied her mamma, very gravely, "may be useful to curb the discontent and ingratitude of our own hearts."

Emma felt the reproof, but it only increased her sullenness.

Mrs. Merton continued ; "who made us to differ from the most wretched in body, the most depraved in mind of our fellow-creatures ? Was the affluence to which we were born the recompence of our merits, or the fruit of any claim

that we had on Him whose the earth is, and all the fulness thereof? That helpless child Emma, on whom your delicate eye cannot bear to dwell, has a soul as immortal, as precious in the sight of God, as yours can be: were she suddenly placed in the midst of the comforts that are yet spared to us, how great would be her wonder and thankfulness! yet upon these mercies I fear you look down with disdain, because your inclinations have been gratified in things, of which the poor have no idea, and without which many a family in easy circumstances is grateful and happy."

"But mamma, is it not natural to feel the loss of these conveniences, considering one has really been always used to them?"

"It is natural Emma, to the mind that has never learned to rise above the vain things of this world; and which regards self-indulgence as the end of its being; but how contrary to the profession of those who acknowledge as the rule of their faith the word which says, 'If ye live after the flesh ye shall die.' 'Love not the world if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' O my child? if we would

more frequently consider that humbling declaration, 'dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,' if we would seriously reflect how little these human distinctions can avail in the momentous concerns of eternity, we should prize them as mere dross."

Produced from the earth, for a season we bloom,
But short the duration, and certain our doom :
We fade as the leaf, in untimely decay,
And our sins, like a whirlwind, have swept us away .

The oak in its beauty, with majesty crown'd
The shrub that but trails its low branch on the ground .
The poisonous weed, and the scent-breathing sweet
Will mingle their foliage in dust at our feet.

What boots it O man, though thy station be high,
And fortune may shine like a fair summer's sky ?
A moment will check the free course of thy breath,
And thou must lie down with the poorest in death.

Alas for thy grandeur ! beneath thee is spread,
The worm :—and the worm may pass over thy head ,
The song and the revel no more dost thou crave,
All hushed in the silence and gloom of the grave.

There are trees that shall bloom in the regions of bliss,
The Lord is their root, and their beauty is this ;

In righteousness planted, they see not decay,
When earth and her dwellings shall vanish away.

O better to spring like a blade from the ground,
And humble and lowly, and mean to be found ;
Than high in the world's leafy forest aspire,
Prepared for the flames of unquenchable fire !

After breakfast, they resumed the business of Emma's education ; and while at her lessons, she felt all the bad effects of her late unreasonable wanderings at home : her eyes roved continually towards the window, without any real wish to go out, and she was constantly changing her position and longing to vary her employment. Her mother remarked it, and lamented the uneasiness which she witnessed, but knowing that no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous, she made allowances for the distress of her little girl ; and owned the necessity of the correction which she hoped would in the end yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. She adored the wisdom and the love, by which the secret evil of her child's heart was thus brought forth to view, and a remedy applied as she humbly trusted, before it became more deep-

ly rooted. We are often disposed to mutter at afflictions, not knowing what messages of mercy they may be made to bring, nor to what a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, they may point the way.

While Mrs. Merton was indulging these thoughts, and fostering a resigned and thankful spirit, little Emma strolled through the garden, rather as a matter of form, than of inclination, and scarcely turned a look upon her Heart's-ease, which seemed to have lost its attractions by becoming a resident in a spot she so much disliked. Dinner brought a renewal of the comparisons which she had made at the breakfast table ; and her mamma being employed all the evening in writing letters, Emma languidly took out and arranged her little treasures of books and toys, and went to bed as melancholy as she had risen.

The next day she made some few attempts to be more cheerful, but without seeking by prayer or serious reflection to impress on her mind the sinfulness of the repinings in which she had indulged. She was tired of being miserable, and

wished to recover her usual gaiety ; but found herself unable to command her spirits, and unwilling to look up to the only true source of all consolation and happiness.

In the evening her mamma accompanied her to the garden ; and after remarking how many useful things were contained in its small space, they stopped before the bed where Emma had placed her plants. They were faint and withering, the flowers dead, the leaves drooping, and discoloured, and all seemed past recovery.

Emma looked at them with something like sullen satisfaction, and said, "Even Heart's-ease will not thrive here." "Heart's-ease does not thrive here, indeed," replied her mother, "but whose is the fault? The flower cannot support itself, nor exist without the supply of moisture which a very little care would abundantly furnish it with. I grieve to see your plants drooping thus, Emma, through your neglect ; but, my child, I grieve much more to witness the destruction of your own peace of mind, overrun by the weeds of discontent and pride, and left unrefreshed by the showers of di-

vine grace, which you no longer seek to call down by prayer and watchfulness."

Emma knew how well she deserved this rebuke; she blushed, and stammered out, "But mamma, the change is so great, and so new—after a little time I shall recover what I have lost." "Never, Emma, if you neglect the means of grace. You may indeed forget your mortifications, and become reconciled by habit to your new condition; but as soon shall those flowers bloom again, without the aid of earth, air, or water, as your spirit know the pleasantness of God's peace, while you indulge all these natural and evil feelings, and go on frowardly in the way of your own heart."

"Why mamma, do not *you* regret the change, and the loss of so many delightful things?"

"Perhaps I do, too much, Emma, but I hope the comforts of God's word are not lost upon me: when the Son of God came to suffer for my sins, he had not where to lay his head: he depended upon the bounty of his disciples, for his daily meal, and I confess the view of that cottage, and our comparative wealth, constrains me

to cry out, 'I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies!' Let us go to the Scriptures for comfort. David the sweet Psalmist of Israel says, 'This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.' Whilst performance of the promise of God is delayed, we may be 'rejoicing in hope,' and the promise is our 'comfort in affliction;' a comfort divine, strong and lasting; a comfort that will not, like all others, fail us when we most want it, in the day of sickness, darkness, distress, and at the hour of death; but will always keep pace with our necessities, increasing in proportion as the pleasures of the world decrease, and then becoming complete when they are no more. So powerful is the word of God to revive us, when dead either in sins or in sorrows—'Thy word hath quickened me.'"

"Mamma," said Emma, "I now see that I have been very wrong. I boasted that I was like the Heart's-ease, and could be contented any where; but now both my flowers and myself are perishing through my sinful temper. I will remedy this mischief," and she ran to fetch

water, and poured it plentifully over the fading leaves. "Now," said she, "they will recover, and you shall see how different a child I shall become."

But the poor plants had been neglected to long : they continued to wither, and Emma soon had the mortification to see them quite dead. Nor was this her worst trouble, for she found that the Lord will sometimes hide his eyes from those who have rejected his counsel, and who would none of his reproof. She was left, for a time, to suffer the greatest distress of mind ; and when looking upon the yellow leaves of her Heart's-ease, she would ask herself with secret dread, "what, if the Lord should leave me to perish also, and never more revive me with the dew of his mercy !"

How gladly now would Emma have changed the cottage so lately despised, for the poorest hovel in the land, if by so doing, she could have regained that sweet confidence which she once felt in approaching the throne of grace with her mamma, and addressing God as her reconciled Father, in Christ Jesus. Often did she repeat

the lines of a beautiful hymn that her mother had taught her,

“Return, O holy dove, return
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
—And drove thee from my breast.”

But little Emma was to be brought into yet deeper waters of trial before she was comforted. She was to experience more fully the truth of the Apostle's declaration, “I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,” and to learn how many a stumbling block the enemy of our salvation can lay in the path of those who begin seriously to inquire after the way in which God has commanded his people to walk.

It has been observed that Mrs. Merton still retained in her service a young girl whose orphan state rendered her a fit object for such compassionate care as her lady could yet show. Martha was several years older than Emma, and early misfortunes had been so far blessed to her, as to excite a desire for more abiding comforts than this changeful world can give : but Martha was “slow of heart to believe,” and like too

many others she looked less into the word of God for confirmation of the truths which she heard, than to the actions of his professed servants, to discover how far their lives corresponded with the peculiar sanctity insisted on by them as inseparable from the Christian character. -Our Lord tells his disciples, that they are "as a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid,"—we know how they are made "a spectacle to all men;" and the adversary is ever on the watch to blaspheme the Author and Finisher of their faith, if that faith fails to bear plenteous and untainted fruit which the supply of his grace is sufficient to produce in the conduct of the true believer. Martha saw that her young lady considered herself a pious character: her little books, selected by her mamma, were all of the most profitable description; she was punctual in prayer, and read the scriptures daily, aloud. Martha had also heard her speak frequently with mingled pity and censure of children, who, being less carefully instructed, were heedless of those things which belonged to their eternal peace: whose hearts were set on their toys, their amusements,

and foolish distinctions in dress : seeking to out-shine each other in the display of fine clothes ; but totally regardless of the inward adorning that the Apostle Paul recommends. Besides, Emma very often made use of scripture language in blaming Martha for her occasional faults ; and took so much of the preacher on herself, that it appeared quite natural for the girl to examine her practice very closely.

It will be readily supposed by those who are at all accustomed to watch their own evil hearts, that Emma was too ready to vent upon Martha the ill-humour occasioned by her discontent and self-reproach, under the late reverse of fortune. She was indeed very careful that her mother should not witness such unbecoming conduct ; but she frequently behaved in a most tyrannical manner to this servant girl : and then, to prevent her complaining to Mrs. Merton, she was obliged to bribe her with some present, or to make amends as she called it, by conversing with a degree of familiarity that her mamma would by no means have allowed of. Nothing was more contrary to Mrs. Merton's character.

than pride; but she knew that it was no part of Christian humility to do away with the distinctions which God has been pleased to permit between the various ranks and classes in society. She taught her little girl, both by doctrine and example, to be gentle, patient, and obliging towards inferiors; but cautioned her against forgetting the respect due to herself by encouraging any thing like intimacy with those whose education and habits must render them unsuitable companions for her. Until the reverses in their fortune took place, Emma had found no great difficulty in obeying her mother's precepts, in this instance: and she was both respected and loved by the domestics in her former abode. But now Martha had too often sufficient grounds for the remark, that it was no great matter to be good humoured when people had every thing at hand to content them: but that Miss Emma, instead of pitying her for having all the work, that so many had shared before, now thrown upon her alone, treated her worse than a slave, because she could not do as much as three or four people in as little time. Often adding, what a

sad thing it was, that Miss Emma's religion did not teach her to be more reasonable towards her fellow-creatures.

Observations like this, Martha would occasionally make, when she knew that Emma must overhear a great part of them : they irritated the little girl, roused the evil spirit of pride ; and very frequently provoked her to scold and threaten, when she should rather have mourned in secret, and prayed for grace to contend against the feelings that exposed her to such mortifying reproofs. It is by no means proper for servants to convey their remarks in Martha's rude manner ; though a truly Christian child will ever be thankful to the lowest inferior for a timely caution, given in respectful and modest terms : if, however, people by intemperate language and inconsistent conduct, expose themselves to the contempt of those around them, they must expect to be the subject of such observations as they would little like to hear. But a much higher principle should operate as a check on all unbecoming demeanour : the pernicious effect of their example, is to harden others, through the

deceitfulness of sin, both against just rebuke, when properly applied, and also against the strivings of the Spirit in their own bosoms, who, by the voice of conscience, reproves them of sin and of judgment. Satan furnishes them with excuses to stifle the warning voice. "If those who know so much better what is right, than a poor ignorant servant can do, give way to every peevish and unreasonable humour, what can be expected from me? And thus screening themselves behind an evil example, they indulge the corrupt propensity of their own dispositions; and refusing to hearken, may perish, long after those who have so cruelly promoted their destruction, forget that they had seen them, but will not the Lord visit for these things? That the poor had the Gospel preached to them, was a distinguishing mark of his divine mission. To preach the Gospel to them he was anointed by the Father with the Holy Spirit; and is it not a most awful thing to oppose that work in which the triune Jehovah has vouchsafed in an especial manner to engage?

Mrs. Merton made a remark of this kind to

Emma, on some occasion when she discovered an instance of improper conduct on her part towards Martha. Emma was both abashed and alarmed: "I am sure mamma, I had no intention to do any thing so wicked; nothing could be farther from my thoughts."

"I believe it Emma," replied her mother, "but is your sin palliated by that want of consideration? surely not: if the law of God was engraven on your heart, it would ever be present to your thoughts, as a most powerful check upon evil suggestions. Our blessed Lord has bade us *take heed* that we offend not one of his little ones—the young, the poor, the weak of his flock. If by neglecting to take heed, you commit this sin, and bring on yourself the woe denounced on him by whom the offence cometh, is the vengeance of God to sleep, and his word to become void, because you suffer a slothful temper to wrap you in spiritual slumber?"

Emma attempted to excuse herself on the plea of their misfortunes having rendered her more hasty and peevish than she was naturally disposed to be.

"Tell me," said Mrs. Merton, "for what purpose are afflictions sent?" receiving no answer, she continued, "wherefore did the Lord lead the people of Israel for forty years through a wilderness, full of gloom and danger, beset by foes; and keep them dependant on a daily miracle for their daily bread?"

Emma replied, "to humble them, and to prove them, and to see what was in their hearts."

"Yes; mark, to humble them, not to make them proud and passionate: to prove and shew them the evil already in their hearts, not to implant bad dispositions that never existed there before. Oh my child! what accusation is this to bring against your Heavenly Father, when you would make the rod a root, not a corrector, of the deceit and desperate wickedness that reign in the heart of every unrenowned sinner; and too obstinately cling even about that of the believer!"

"But, mamma, the temptation is so great. You don't know how provoking Martha sometimes is."

"Temptation, my dear, is to be avoided; we

are instructed to pray against it; but, as the Lord sometimes sees it necessary for the trial of our faith, we have a blessedness pronounced on him who endureth temptation: him, who, recollecting the promise that a way of escape shall ever be left open, pleads his own weakness, and casting himself upon the Lord in believing prayer, experiences that he can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him. A state of affluence is fraught with many snares, calculated to draw and beguile the soul from the contemplations of heavenly treasures, of this we have a proof in the young ruler who came to Christ, with a fair account of his past duties, and a professed desire to perform whatever might be further necessary to obtain eternal life: but when the searcher of hearts probed the secret unsoundness of his, by requiring him to renounce his worldly wealth, he was so entangled in its snares that he went away; turned his back on the Saviour, and plunged into those things that would finally drown him in perdition. But, delusive as riches are, poverty and sorrow have their perils too. It was in a season of pe-

culiar privation, and bodily suffering that the great enemy approached the Son of God with his specious temptations: it was in the hour of personal danger, that Peter so lamentably fell. Satan, who overcame David in the midst of sloth and luxury, defiling him with many sins, and leading him to pierce himself through with many sorrows, overwhelmed Job in the deepest penury, affliction, and anguish of body and mind, for the same hateful and cruel purpose. How formidable is the power, how deadly the malice of this our inveterate foe! Christians can boast that they are not ignorant of his devices; yet how frequently is his very existence forgotten, at the moment when he is nearest to us: and how criminally negligent are we in not putting on the whole armour of God, the only defence against his overwhelming attacks!"

"Mamma," said Emma, "considering how very crafty and strong this enemy is, can it be wondered at if he often gets the better of a weak child like me?"

Mrs. Merton shook her head—"Your object is to justify yourself, as if Satan's strength must

be too great against you ; but beware of that error. Have I not just said that we are too remiss, in not wielding our spiritual weapons against our spiritual foe ? Surely we are culpable beyond all expression in consenting to the suggestions of the devil, who, let it ever be remembered, can only tempt ; he cannot compel. To the weakest child is the encouragement as sure, as to the strongest and most experienced Christian, ‘ Resist the devil and he will flee from you.’ Who shall compel us for a moment to wear his chains, when we are invited to behold the mighty work wrought to deliver sinners ‘ from the bondage of Satan,’ and to make them ‘ free indeed ?’ Has not the Lord Jesus ‘ through death destroyed him that hath the power of death, even the devil ?’ Are not all who believe, ‘ more than conquerors through him that loved us ?’ The subtlety and power of your adversary do indeed call for incessant watchfulness and prayer ; but will never excuse your yielding in the smallest instance to his temptations.”

Thus constantly admonished, Emma learned more carefully to watch over her own heart ;

and the consequence was an increasing knowledge of herself, and a deepened view of the depravity with which that fountain of her thoughts, words, and actions, was tainted: until reduced almost to despair, she would secretly exclaim, "if out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, what an evil treasure must be lodged in mine! I bring forth from it nothing but evil things: I am constantly disgracing myself and disgusting others, by some new proof of a proud, wicked, contentious, and uncharitable disposition. These cannot be the feelings of God's children; for the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, none of these things belong to my character, and therefore I am not a Christian." In this view of herself Emma was perfectly right; she had never experienced the renewing power of the Holy Ghost, never put off that old man, the corrupt nature that was born with her, nor had she with her heart believed unto salvation; but Emma was quite wrong in the conclusion which she drew from this distressing survey. Supposing it impossible

to contend successfully against the enemy, who seemed to laugh to scorn all her feeble attempts at self-reformation, she was completely discouraged, and gave up the point, expecting to be converted by a miracle of grace at some future period; or, what was too frequently the case, driving the great subject of salvation entirely from her thoughts, and labouring on mere worldly motives, for a more decent and becoming line of conduct; laying a restraint on her temper, and persuading herself that by so doing she was rendering her character amiable and respectable. In all this she met with little internal opposition: the enemy of souls cares not how moral and decorous, how benevolent and praiseworthy, our outward demeanour may become, so long as it is not founded on a regard to the divine command, a deep sense of God's holiness, and an entire dependance on His sacred influence, working in us that we may have a good will to do his pleasure, and working with us when we have that good will. Emma at first wished the Lord to effect in her the change that she knew was requisite; but to be a fellow worker together

with God, to do her part in it, by a lively faith, perseverance in prayer, and steady resistance against besetting sins, this was too arduous an undertaking for her slothful spirit; and while, through her tender mother's care, the seed of the word was still daily sown, she suffered a thousand weeds to spring up, and choke the soil, making it unfruitful, until her religion became a mere form; and she rested content in the observance of outward duties, indifferent to the most awakening calls of exhortation from without, and conscience from within.

More than two years thus passed away, and Emma improved in every thing but the most important of all—she grew in stature, but not in grace: her features were pleasing, but her real character unlovely; her manners were insinuating, but her temper worldly, and her thoughts unholy. In every branch of education that her mother, herself highly accomplished, continued to exercise her in, she excelled: but alas! what availed these external decorations, while her soul was secretly perishing for lack of that knowledge which she was too indolent to seek!

She had now entered her fifteenth year, and a new source of anxiety assailed her, which strongly roused her feelings; Mrs. Merton was of a delicate constitution, and since the death of her husband she had not recovered from the effects of her long and anxious attendance upon him through a painful illness. Emma was accustomed to see her mamma look pale, and eat little; but now she was becoming so very thin, and her appetite was so entirely gone, and her whole appearance shewed such extreme weakness, that Emma began to be very much frightened about her.

The clergyman of the parish died; and his successor was a most pious and excellent minister: he soon heard of the reverse in Mrs. Merton's fortune, and observed her quiet devout attendance, upon the outward ordinances of religion. He felt more interested because of her sickly appearance, and the anxious looks of her daughter. He took an opportunity of calling at the cottage, and offered his friendship and services with so much sincere friendship, that Mrs. Merton gladly accepted them.

Mr. Selby, that was the minister's name, had a daughter two years older than Emma. Mary Selby was pious, cheerful, active, and always looking out for opportunities of doing good. She used to say, "there are younger girls than me buried in the church-yard, and if I am called away also, I must not be found like the foolish virgins, sleeping in idleness, without oil in my lamp. There is much for such as me to do; many poor children are ignorant of what I am made happy by knowing, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all who believe, and that they who name his name are required to depart from iniquity. I must assist to teach these poor children: and I must earn a little, and save a little, to give to those who are sending Bibles and Missionaries to the heathen, and the Jews." With these feelings, it will be believed that Mary was seldom idle. Between her school and her other work, she found that it was pleasant to redeem the time, and improve it. Of Emma she soon became so fond that there was some danger of her being drawn off from her usual employments by her society; but Mary watched

against the temptation, and instead of being idle herself, taught Emma to be industrious.

It will readily be believed that such a companion was a great acquisition to our poor Emma, even in a worldly point of view : for she had scarcely an acquaintance of an age suitable to her own ; and since Mrs. Merton became so exceedingly weak, her daughter had little inclination, and less opportunity for any society beyond the walls of their own cottage, until this happy arrival at the parsonage. It was no small comfort to find a sympathizing friend in whose indulgent ear she could pour forth her complaints and anxieties respecting her mother : but in more important matters the benefit which she derived from associating with Mary, was incalculable. Satisfied that Mrs. Merton was most sincerely pious, and observing the correct manner of Emma, the Selbys concluded that her daughter, though more reserved in her expressions, was equally influenced by the spirit of Christianity. Mary, indeed sometimes doubted : but the uncertainty only increased her anxiety to render her conversation as profitable as possible to her

young companion. She consulted her on many laudable plans for the temporal comfort and spiritual improvement of the poor around them; she read with her the most interesting and affecting details of the progress of divine truth, at home and abroad; often inviting her to join in prayer for the fulfilment of that glorious time, when, from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, the Lord's name shall be great among the gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto His name, and a pure offering. When the Lord shall have turned again the captivity of Zion, and all Israel shall be saved. Over such passages as these, Mary would even weep for joy, as she traced in the great work so auspiciously commenced throughout the world, the dawn of an eternal day. "Think dear Emma," she would say, "how great a cause for humble thankfulness have we, not only in being permitted to behold these things, but in reflecting that our own country is made the first, the most distinguished instrument, in promoting the Lord's gracious purposes! Look at this small speck on the globe. The

British dominions, long receiving the Gospel, and the abundant grace of Christ, are now like a little fountain supplying a majestic river, dispersing the treasure over the earth, in a constantly augmenting stream of blessings!"

Emma saw so much to admire as well as to love in her new friend, that she often spoke to her in the language of commendation, which Mary failed not to check and reprove. She would say, "You compare me, Emma, with those unhappy persons who scarcely know that they have immortal souls, and who never reflect that they must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and give account of themselves to Him who cannot be deceived. Poor creatures, they do not consider that our time and all the advantages enjoyed by us are but lent, and to be employed for the glory of Him who entrusts us with them. When, in the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke, I meet with those words: 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward,' I am led to serious reflection. I know this passage concerns me: and what a

careless unfaithful steward I have been of all the blessings committed to my care !”

“You judge yourself very severely, dear Mary,” said Emma. “Nobody else thinks so of you.”

“And if I do judge myself,” she replied, “it is but what I am commanded to do. By examining, with sincerity and prayer, our own conduct and motives, we are enabled to see what is wrong, and directed where, especially, to strive against ourselves. This, I suppose is what the Apostle Paul means, when he says, ‘judge yourselves brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord.’ As to what others think of me, there are two texts from the same Apostle, that serve to prevent my being much affected by that. He speaks of some, who ‘measuring’ themselves by themselves,’ are not wise. This arms me against such dangerous commendations as yours, dear Emma. And when I am blamed or ridiculed for following what I know to be my duty, I can in my heart, I hope, without any angry or contemptuous feeling, address such censors thus : ‘with me it is a very small thing that I should

be judge of you or of any man's judgment.' I know that He who judgeth me is the Lord—who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart."

"You seem," said Emma, "to have a text of Scripture ready for every occasion."

"If I have not," answered Mary, "it is my own fault. God has given us his word as 'a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths;' but to what purpose, if we do not take it abroad with us, when we walk in this dangerous world?"

"But how can you remember so much of it?" asked Emma.

"I know my need of such defence and direction: and I pray constantly to have the law of God put into my mind, and written on my heart: then, too, I have the assistance of pious parents, who point out to me the passages most profitable for one of my youth and inexperience. I endeavour to read the Bible not as a matter of form, or of merit, as I fear some ignorant young persons do; but as I should listen to directions, by which alone I could escape straying into the haunts of

wild beasts, or falling from the edge of a precipice, when about to undertake a long and difficult journey."

"You make me fear that I never yet have read the Scriptures properly," observed Emma. "Then begin to-day," said Mary, "Delay not, it is not your bodily safety, but the eternal interest of your immortal soul that depends on it. God gave his book to be studied; and has annexed a blessing to the devout observance of his command; while those who neglect it go on in darkness, and stumble, perhaps to fall forever."

In the world a trembling stranger,
Shall I slight a heavenly guide?
Wherefore roam in fear and danger,
When the Lord would help provide:
Snarcs and perils spread before me,
Welcome be the beam that shews
Every evil brooding o'er me,
Each device of crafty foes.

While the page of truth perusing,
Lord, do thou unseal mine eyes;
So the triflers part refusing,
I should run to reach the prize.

On my solemn thought impressing
Things eternal, though unseen ;
Bid me scorn the worldling's blessing,
Joys unstable, poor and mean.

When thy law, declar'd in thunder,
Makes my guilty soul afraid ;
Let me speed, in grateful wonder,
To the rock's protecting shade.
Blessed Jesus—Rock of ages !
Holy Spirit ! help I crave ;
When I search the sacred pages,
On my soul the words engrave !

Mary repeated these lines with great feeling ; and Emma was much affected by the conversation. She secretly compared the eagerness of her friend in seeking instruction from the Scriptures, and her anxiety to keep constantly on her mind all that she there learned, with her own cold, careless performance of what she dared not entirely neglect. "I feel as if I had omitted a duty, when I do not read a chapter in the Bible," thought Emma ; "and when I do so, as if I had performed an act of obedience ; but I have not prayed as Mary does, to remember what I read

continually afterwards; mamma tells me to do so, and, I know, she does it herself: how came I to neglect such a great duty? I will begin this very day, as Mary advises me, and never again omit it."

But poor Emma found it more easy to make this good resolution than to abide by it. Something was constantly intervening to call off her attention; frequently she delayed the reading of her Bible for half-an-hour, and found the opportunity gone, through successive interruptions. Besides—and she felt it the worst of all obstacles—there was in her heart an unwillingness to persevere steadily in the course of reading and meditation, that she had marked out for herself: and trifles were not more ready to intrude than she was to give her attention to them; although a sad, comfortless, and guilty feeling seemed to embitter her mind all the day long, when the duty had been unattended to.

Despairing at last of ever becoming like Mary in this respect, she resolved to give up the attempt altogether: but her looks were so overcast in consequence, that her watchful mother

felt assured some new trouble pressed upon the evidently humbled heart of her child. By the affectionate enquiries of Mrs. Merton, Emma was induced to tell the whole truth. Her mamma secretly thanked the Lord who had blessed her daughter with a friend so truly valuable; and replied to Emma's sad recital of her discouragements and despair. "What you complain of, my love, is the general experience of all who diligently set themselves to enquire after the things that belong unto their peace. Let the constant obstructions with which you meet, keep you watchful against an enemy whom you find so eager to throw every stumbling-block in your way: and while you feel your own proneness to turn aside after all the idle baits that he would allure you with, consider, both how very much, so evil and thankless a nature needs the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and how great is the mercy and compassion that can so long bear with our deeply rooted sinfulness!"

"But mamma," said Emma, "I never, never can keep to Mary's rule; and I must give it up."

"I grieve to hear my Emma use such lan-

guage. I have seen you roused to double exertion, when any difficulty impeded your studies, or opposed the gratification of your wishes ; is it only in the trifles of this fleeting life that you can persevere, while the great and eternal business of salvation is to be laid aside so readily at the first obstacle ?”

Emma hung her head. “ You know, mamma, I am too weak and sinful to do any thing right of myself ; and I do not feel as if any help was given me from above.”

“ What help can you require, my child, beyond that so freely and impressively promised by our Lord ? Find the eleventh chapter of St. Luke, and read the ninth, and four following verses.” Emma read. “ And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and you shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone ? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish, give him a serpent ? Or if he shall ask an

egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? "Now," continued Mrs. Merton, "our blessed Lord here shews us the natural inclination of an earthly parent to supply the wants of his offspring, and the improbability of his disappointing their reliance on his care and judgment. Is there no comfortable help promised in the concluding words, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' Is there no confidence inspired by the positive assurance, 'I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you?'"

"Ah! yes, mamma; it is very encouraging."

"Then go, my child, into my dressing-room," said Mrs. Merton, "take that portion of Scripture to meditate and pray over; and be assured the promise is unto you, as much as to any who heard it uttered."

Emma gladly obeyed : and as she went, could not but acknowledge that help was already sent, in the counsel and assistance of her mother.

Emma repeated all this to Mary, at their next meeting : who replied, "It is with you as it was with me : and you must learn to wait the Lord's leisure. He often makes his people wait, for a trial of their faith and patience : and you must remember that we are told to consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our minds."

"What do you understand by that?" said Emma. Mary replied, "Papa tells me the apostle means to direct our attention, under all troubles, and persecutions, and hindrances, from without or within, to the Lord Jesus, who patiently endured more than we can imagine, to accomplish the great work of our salvation : and the recollection of whose sufferings must make us ready cheerfully to encounter whatever he permits to molest us, while we are running the race set before us, to obtain the inheritance which He has laid up for us in heaven."

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Thus assisted and admonished, Emma was able to persevere in her wise resolution ; always praying to be kept steadfast in the work of the Lord. She found the promise fulfilled to her, and many a warning or encouraging text was brought to her mind, to check the rising murmur of discontent, to combat the spirit of sloth and self-indulgence, and to lead her onward in the narrow path, overhung as it was by a dark cloud, that constantly saddened her mind as she looked on the drooping form and faded countenance of a parent, rendered daily more dear to the child who now felt the full value of her instructions and example.

Mr. Selby was in very easy circumstances, and managed to convey many comforts to the cottagers that their means could not have afforded them ; but above all he supplied them liberally with the consolations of real religion. In his visits to them Mary usually accompanied him : very often she went alone, to carry some little delicacy in her small basket ; and by her manner of offering it she made it doubly welcome to the poor invalid ; for Mrs. Merton soon

became too weak to go beyond the narrow bounds of her own garden, and the adjoining ground. One afternoon in autumn, the two young friends were rambling there, and Mrs. Merton slowly following them; when a bird that appeared to have been lamed in its wing, hopped before them on the path, and endeavoured to get away—they pursued it to a corner of the field, but it made its escape through the hedge. Emma stooped to look after it, and discovered a profusion of her old favourites, the Heart's-ease, blowing on the bank, in the richest beauty.

“Oh! mamma, mamma,” she exclaimed, “I have found” —— and there she stopped, with the painful recollections that arose at the moment.

“You have found some old friends, I believe, Emma,” replied her mother.

“Why no, mamma, not exactly so: but of that race.”

“Some of the very same that my Emma brought from her home,” said Mrs. Merton.

“Impossible, mamma.”

“Not at all, my dear: I foresaw from the un-

happy nature of your feelings at the time, that your Heart's-ease would command but little of your care, and after you were gone to rest, on the evening of your arrival, I removed a root from the garden to this spot; to prove whether, under proper treatment, Heart's-ease would not thrive even here."

"Oh! my dear mamma, what a lesson those flowers give me!"

"A sweet lesson," said Mary, "that shews us what we may learn by considering the lilies of the field how they grow."

"Yes," added Mrs. Merton, "He who clothes them, will not only give us covering for our bodies, but will also adorn us with humility, meekness, patience, and every fruit of the Spirit, if such be our desire. Let us but do our part, as faithful labourers; and see here a proof that He will not fail to perform His."

"Sweet little flower," thought Emma, as she placed one in her bosom, "you shall be my preacher."

It was not long after this, that Mrs. Merton became quite unable to leave her bed, and the

medical gentleman whom Mr. Selby had introduced to her, confessed that he had no hope of seeing her quit it alive. Emma nursed her mother with the tenderest care; and Mary shortened the time usually allotted to her other charitable works, to share the task—"For," thought she, "here are the fatherless and the widow in affliction, looking to us for succour; and He has said, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice.' My Bible and Missionary box may be less full: but this present work is given to me, and I must do it with all my might." And so indeed she did; for when Mrs. Merton became much worse, she asked and obtained leave of her parents to stay entirely with Emma, and a clever old nurse, whom Mr. Selby had sent to attend the cottage.

The Heart's-ease, from the fields, still formed a part in every bouquet which the girls prepared for their beloved, but dying charge; and Mrs. Merton would smile as she bade Emma observe how well it graced a sick room; often outliving all the flowers from the garden, and expanding one little bud after another, as if still in its native soil.

"I never loved it so well," said Emma, trying to hide her tears, "as since it cheered your painful hours, mamma."

"I cannot help preferring Hyacinths, and other bulbous roots," remarked Mary.

"Why, my dear?"

"Because they give a more striking idea of the resurrection, madam. When I bury such a thing in the earth, and consider what a different and lovely object will arise, I seem to comprehend the feeling under which St. Paul wrote the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians—it fills my mind with such delightful hopes and anticipations."

"Yet I cannot give up my Heart's-ease," said Emma.

"The Lord has given us," said Mrs. Merton, "a great variety of beautiful types, my children: one flower may more aptly represent to us the mortal life, another the future state of the Christian, while all proclaim the tidings of their Maker's power, and providential care.—Nothing is formed in vain: whatever we overlook, in this wide and wonderful creation, is a loss to our-

selves; for all speak eloquently of Him for whose pleasure they are and were created."

"But some are so small that we cannot examine them," said Emma.

"Yes," replied her mother, "man, as he approaches farther in science, makes new discoveries of his own ignorance. The solar microscope, an instrument that magnifies every object to many thousand times its natural size, shews a small tuft of the common grass, when running to seed, in inconceivable beauty, as the richest flower of delicate green, studded and fringed with silver—a most magnificent object, yet trod under our feet without a thought. When the apostle declares the glory of man to be as the flower of grass, he likens it to one of the most beautiful as well as fragile things in nature: 'the wind passeth over it, and it is gone—but the word of the Lord endureth for ever;' and that is the word of the Gospel, which brings to light, life, and immortality, and shews to our sight of faith, a glory that cannot fade."

In such conversations as these, Mrs. Merton passed the hours, when she had strength suffi-

cient ; and in listening to the blessed word of life, accompanied, as it always was, with united prayer, and frequently with the plain and forcible exposition of the pious Mr. Selby.

That kind minister had visited Mrs. Merton one day, and delicately told her, that on her departure it was the wish of himself and his wife, to receive Emma as an inmate of their house, and to educate her with their Mary. 'The heart of Mrs. Merton sang for joy at this intimation ; and since an allowance was reserved for Emma in the wreck of their property, that would prevent her ever being a burden on these generous friends, she had no difficulty in accepting the offer.

On that night she was so ill that Mary and Emma would not leave her apartment ; and Mrs. Merton, conscious that the hand of death was upon her, did not wish to deprive them of a scene so awful and so instructive.

After a time she appeared to slumber, and Mary whispered to Emma, "Now let us read together and pray."

"Let us read," replied Emma, "the last chapter of Hosea."

"Why that?" asked Mary.

"Because," said Emma, "that chapter brought so much comfort to me, when my own sinfulness had made me so very miserable; it helped me to praise the Lord, when I felt that his anger began to be turned away; and it suits me now, because it assures me that in Him the fatherless findeth mercy."

They read the chapter, and Mary could not but feel how applicable it was to poor Emma.

They prayed, and then Mary said, "You are much supported, dear Emma."

"Yes, I am," she replied, while wiping away the tears that streamed down her cheeks.

"My mother is about to be taken away from this world, to eternal glory, but my loss will be her great gain. If I could tell you, Mary, all that passed in my mind for some months after our first acquaintance, you would say the Lord is wonderful indeed in His doings towards the children of men. If I had not been so corrected, My soul would have been lost: and if I had

not been so comforted, my heart would have broken. And it would break now," she added, looking towards the bed, and sobbing, "only that I know where she is going."

"Yes, my dear Emma," said Mary, "is there not comfort in that? The day of human life, is 'a day of trouble,' a day of darkness and gloominess, which nothing can brighten, but the light of God's countenance; nothing can render comfortable, but a speedy answer of mercy and peace from above. When heart and flesh fail, to find the Lord your rock, your fortress, your deliverer, your God, your strength in whom you can trust, your buckler, and the horn of your salvation, and your high tower. Sweet names! we know little of our wants and dangers, or we should better feel how impossible it would be to spare one of the many titles and characters under which He makes himself known to us.—What comfort could we take from all these glorious sayings if we did not know that Jesus is Lord, yea Lord of lords, one with the Father, God over all, blessed for ever? His sufferings as man, can atone for the sins of a guilty world.—I love to

think of the Lord Jesus now, as holding the keys of death and of hell—as ‘He that shutteth and no man openeth; that openeth and no man shutteth.’”

“Yes,” added Emma, “He which was dead and is alive.”

“And therefore,” said Mary, “because he was dead and is alive, he says unto us, ‘Fear not. Death is no longer an object of fear; for the Lord Jesus has been in the grave, to overcome him who hath the power of death, that is the devil. And since he is God, we are sure he has power to quicken whom he will, and to fulfil his promise.—He has said, ‘Because I live, ye shall live also.’ I could not trust a Saviour who was less than Almighty. Let us be thankful then that our young minds are impressed with these precious truths. How many, even at this hour, may be watching the last breath of those who are no less dear to them than this departing soul is to us: they think of heaven as a desirable place; and recollecting all that was most endearing in the character and conduct of the object before them, they look upon eternal life as the sure re-

ward of such an amiable person. Alas! how many believe that a decent attention to outward duties, and a patient submission to sickness or sorrow, shall be crowned with glory, and honour, and immortality!" "They do not consider," Emma replied, "that their worst sufferings are infinitely less than they deserve, if it was only because the best that they can do falls so far short of what God requires. And their obedience would not purchase heaven if it was perfect, for you know the Lord bids us confess that we are unprofitable servants, after doing all, it is no more than our duty—and by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified." Mary remarked, "the low notions that people in general have of heaven make them suppose it is so easily earned. Do they consider that 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him?'—do they know what it is to see His face, and have His name written in their foreheads; to be a pillar in His temple and to go no more out? The soul must be fitted and prepared to enjoy the glories of heaven, by mak-

ing communion with God, in prayer, and in His word and service, its delight on earth. If these things are strange or wearisome to us now, they would be so then. The most beautiful scenery has no charms for the blind, nor the sweetest music for the deaf; nor could the presence of glorified spirits, of holy angels, and of God himself, delight the soul that continues 'earthly, sensual, devilish,'—such are all who have not been born again."

"Yet how many die in this false peace," said Emma, "they have no bands in their death; but the delusion in which they perish is their own choice. They know that the Bible reveals God's will to man: they are aware that unless they do His will, they cannot please Him: yet they put that book aside, and marking out a path of duties of their own choosing, they determine to get to heaven by that broad road, rather than seek the one narrow way that He has appointed. It is so wonderful to see God's word neglected where His name is confessed, and His worship carried on, that if we did not clearly behold it we could scarcely believe it possible."

“My mamma never neglected it,” said Emma; “in prosperity it seemed to keep her humble; and in adversity to make her cheerful; while, as you well know, it has been the best medicine to her in sickness, and now smooths the bed of death,”—her heart was too full to say more.

“It has lighted her steps,” exclaimed Mary, “to the entrance of the valley of the shadow of death: and now the Lord himself will be her light and support, whilst she is passing through that valley.”

“Oh yes,” said Emma with animation, “the Lord will surely come: He says ‘I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.’”

Mrs. Merton extended her hand to her child, and in a faint voice said, “Here is a word of comfort from that well-spring of consolation, the Holy Bible. David could say, when in affliction, ‘My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for

ever.' He said this because he could also say, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' 'In his presence there is fulness of joy; and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore.'"

They drew nearer to her, and she went on.

" 'The sting of death is sin.' You have felt the sharpness of that sting, my Emma, in the days of your health. O remember, then, how terrible it must be when heart and flesh are failing? Remember Him who alone can take it away; and so live to Him, that in a dying hour He may not forsake you. It is sweet to be stayed on Him; it is sweet to feel, when approaching the deep waters of death, that

'Safe is the expanded wave,
Gentle as a summer's eve;
Not one object of his care
Ever suffered shipwreck there.' "

Mrs. Merton paused, for she was exhausted: yet her lips moved in prayer, and there was a lovely smile upon them. The young girls felt: we-struck; and pressed close to each other's

side. The good old nurse passed her arms around them.

"There is nothing terrible in death, my children," said she, "when we know that it is the gate of life."

"Nothing terrible, nothing, nothing," said Mrs. Merton.

Mary bent down her head, and ventured to whisper, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Thanks, thanks be to God," repeated Mrs. Merton, and expired.

It was on a very chill evening, quite after the close of autumn, that Emma and Mary visited the spot where Mr. and Mrs. Merton were laid to rest. Mr. Selby had taken them there to enjoy this sad satisfaction. The wind whistled through the yew tree, and its dark branches waved like the plume of a hearse. The grass was yellow and matted, the rose trees were bare all looked dreary and melancholy; but the lingering blossoms of the Heart's-ease yet shone amid the scene of desolation, and peeped from among the dry stalks and shrivelled leaves that

surrounded them. (Emma looked : she smiled through her tears ; a sensation of delight stole over her spirit, and as she turned away from the beloved spot, she murmured,

“These sweet little flowers thrive every where.”

THE

TWO CARPENTERS



THE

TWO CARPENTERS.

In a small market town, very respectably inhabited, dwelt a carpenter named George Hardy. He was an active, good mechanic: and being the only person in that place who could undertake the finer sort of work, he had sufficient employment among the gentry. The articles which they ordered were usually made with neatness, but with so little regard to punctuality, that the patience of the customers was generally exhausted by repeated delays in the execution of them. If promises had been sufficient, they had them in plenty; but promising is one thing, and performing is another. Hardy knew it would be more inconvenient to most of his customers to

send to the next town, than to wait his leisure, he therefore bore very quietly their complaints and reproaches, and took his own time in completing their orders; still "pacifying" them as he called it, with positive assurances that they should be performed immediately. Like too many other tradesmen, he accustomed himself to this kind of deceit, until it became so settled a habit, that his conscience scarcely reproached him with the falsehood which he daily uttered—he paid little regard to the word of God, or he would have found that his promises were untruths, his deceits were lies. If Hardy was reminded by his friends of the sinfulness of this practice, he would speak of the trifling nature of the offence; and say, that the success of his business depended on keeping his customers in good humour. But there is no such thing as a trifling sin, it is the *principle* of obedience that God requires of us; and to depart from that in the smallest degree, shows that we are not influenced either by his love or fear. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much."

As to keeping his employers in good humour, nobody likes to be deceived and imposed upon ; and if any appeared satisfied, it was only, as the event showed, because they could not help themselves.

After a long time, another carpenter came to follow his trade in the neighbourhood ; he was a young man, who worked neatly and with expedition, but never undertook to do more than he was sure of finishing within the given time. When asked to take home any thing, and complete it immediately, he was used to reply, " I will do it, Sir as soon as possible ; but at present I am employed on work for another customer which I must first finish : after that I will execute your orders." " But cannot your other customer wait a day longer ? I am in haste, and this will only occupy you for a few hours."

" No Sir," he would say, " I promised the gentleman that I would attend to his business alone, till it was quite finished : afterwards I am ready to do the work for you."

By these means, William Steele established such a character for punctuality, that if he once

promised, his customers were sure that nothing but unforeseen accident would prevent his fulfilling his word.

The gentlemen would say, "it is a pity to see poor Hardy losing all his business thus; but when things are wanted, it is impossible not to prefer a person who will be true to the day and hour that he names, to one who will readily promise for to-morrow, and keep you waiting a week or a fortnight."

One observed, "I expected a large party to dinner: a week before they came, I sent for Hardy to repair a table, charging him not to undertake it unless he was certain of finishing his work in good time—he promised faithfully, as he called it. The day approached, I sent frequently, and the reply always was, that it was nearly done, and would shortly be sent home. At last, the very day before I wanted the table, I went myself to his house—got a sight of my table with some difficulty, and found the work was not yet begun! Of course I ordered it home; and much trouble I had to make out sufficient accommodation for my guests. Never tell me of

such a fellow's misfortunes in losing his trade; I am heartily glad to be no longer dependent upon him."

Another gentleman said, "in a circumstance similar to what you mention, I sent for Steele; he told me it was doubtful whether he could properly finish the work, within the time named by me; but that he could so repair the article, as to make it answer for immediate use, and would then take it home, and let me know how soon it might be completed. He did so, and was punctual in returning it. I would wait any time to employ at last, so trusty a character."

Meanwhile, Hardy only laughed at the success of his rival. "A new broom sweeps clean," he would say: "this fellow will soon have his hands so full of work, that some must needs be put off: and then they will bring their complaints and their custom to me again." But he was mistaken; Steele never departed from the rule with which he began; and became such a general favourite, that the gentry would have forgotten Hardy altogether if they had not been obliged sometimes

to send for him, when the other was too busily engaged to receive their orders.

It may be supposed, that Hardy felt like an injured man ; and greatly resented the success of the stranger, which he had himself chiefly assisted to bring about. Steele was very friendly, and wished to obtain his good will ; but Hardy became more sullen and rude to him every day ; and was even heard to utter very bad wishes respecting this industrious young man. The loss of his business fell heavily upon Hardy's young family, and he was already giving way to habits of idleness and dissipation. When his wife reasoned with him upon the subject, he would answer, "you may go preach to Steele, who has taken the bread out of our mouths, and is driving me to ruin."

Steele had been strongly advised to take a journeyman, with whose assistance he might have commanded the custom of the whole country round : but with a generosity very seldom met with in this selfish world, he refused ; saying, that he had none but himself to provide for ; that his own earnings were quite sufficient for

him ; and that by enriching himself at his neighbour's expence, he should heap distresses on the family of a man whom he did not wish to injure.

The minister of the parish, a most benevolent and religious man, had, from the first admonished Hardy on the sinfulness of his frequent departures from truth, and the disgrace that he would suffer on this account. "And even though you should still prosper on earth," he added, "yet remember, 'it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,' when a strict account must be given of these things, which you now regard so lightly, but against which the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, and eternal punishment prepared for the transgressors. Depend upon it, Hardy, 'a lying lip is but for a moment :' and though you should gain the whole world by unjust means, you must give your soul in exchange, and the bargain will profit you nothing, but be a fearful and irretrievable loss."

'These friendly warnings had no effect ; it is the nature of sin, when persisted in, to harden the heart, and to make the conscience insensible, as if seared with a hot iron. Hardy found it so :

falsehood became so familiar to him, that he seemed hardly to believe in the real existence of truth ; and scoffed at the conscientious dealings of Steele, as if they had been the basest hypocrisy, solely calculated to advance his interests in the world.

Hardy forgot, or did not credit the wise adage, that "honesty is the best policy ;" still less did he bear in mind the scriptural declaration, that "godliness is profitable unto all things ; having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."

Matters were going on thus, when it was reported that a rich nobleman, who had a house in that part of the country, long unoccupied, had determined to spend the summer months there ; and that his son was come down to see it put in order.

This event roused Hardy. "Surely," said he, "the young Lord will not pass by an old servant of his father's, to employ this upstart whom nobody knows. I shall take care to put myself in his way."

Very soon after, Hardy had an opportunity of

meeting his Lordship, who was walking with a friend; and it so happened, that the gentleman was then advising him to employ Steele, in executing the necessary repairs of the house. Hardy made a low bow, and looked wistfully at them as he passed.

The young nobleman called him back, and it may be supposed, that he obeyed with no small joy; and when asked whether he would engage to perform some work at the castle, within a given time, he was as ready as ever with his promises of dispatch and punctuality.

"This is not what I want," said his Lordship, "you are engaging to do more than I can reasonably expect, and such hasty promises generally lead to disappointment. There is occasion for much work in your line at the castle; and I mean to employ both you and the other carpenter. I shall then judge of your respective abilities and application."

Hardy was not particularly pleased at hearing this; he had hoped to have the sole superintendence of the men employed; but relying on his

own skill and sagacity, he doubted not but that ultimately he would triumph over Steele.

Returning home, he told his wife how affably the young Lord had spoken to him; and prepared to brighten his rusty tools.

"What a grand thing a Lord must be!" exclaimed one of the children; "what is he like, father?"

"Like any other gentleman, as far as I can see; he is a fine young man, with a mild, good tempered look."

"But are you not afraid to speak to him, father?"

"Not a bit, child: he has no pride, nothing like vanity about him; he dresses as any respectable gentleman ought to do: and speaks to a poor man, as if he was made of the same earth as himself."

Hardy was right in his observation: the young Lord was a truly Christian character; and in him the dignity of high birth was tempered by the humility of unaffected piety. He had the habit of recollecting that every person to whom he spoke, possessed an immortal soul; and to do

good to that soul was a principal object with him. To effect this, the condescending kindness of his manner led the way ; and all who addressed him, felt that they were speaking to a friend.

On the following day, Hardy repaired to the castle in the best spirits ; and Steele soon joined him. They settled their plan of proceeding, and Hardy gave himself no small airs of superiority ; hinting that his interest with the family had been the means of getting Steele employed at the castle. To such shameless falsehood are they led who wander from the straight path of sincerity and truth !

But Steele treated him with great civility, observing the respect due to an older and more experienced person. They went on well together, and Hardy's tools not being in very good condition, the other pressed him to make use of his. Hardy gave him no credit for any disinterested good will ; he thought that Steele was flattering him, as a means of being noticed by the noble family, of whose patronage he himself boasted immoderately.

By degrees Steele led Hardy to converse on

other subjects ; and he, having got into tolerable good humour, was less reserved. One day, when they were working together, Steele being at a loss, was set right by his companion, for which he expressed his thanks.

"Why truly, partner," said Hardy, "I don't see any great difference between us, as to workmanship. Certainly, I know as much as you do."

"A great deal more," said Steele, "you have had longer practice, and have a very quick eye, and a correct hand."

"But not enough to satisfy the gentry down yonder," replied Hardy rather bitterly, and nodding his head towards the town.

"Ah, neighbour!" exclaimed Steele, "I wish you would allow me to speak to you on that subject." "I cannot hinder you," said Hardy sullenly ; "they laugh that win, and I suppose they may talk too." "I came to this town," continued Steele, "because I understood there was work enough for a second person, without en croaching on you."

"So there was."

"Well—I never intended, or wished to do it."

the preference given to me was both unexpected and unwelcome, since it was a clear loss to a brother tradesman; but if you will listen to the advice of a sincere well-wisher, I think I can show you how to retrieve what is lost."

"With the help of his Lordship's interest," said Hardy, giving him a sly look.

"His Lordship's interest," said Steele, "cannot do away with the objections that I have heard against you; and if those were removed, your own abilities would bring you on without such help; but I want you to enjoy the interests of one much higher, and more powerful than the Lord of this castle."

"What! I suppose you would send me with a letter of recommendation to another part of the country," said Hardy, laughing scornfully. "By no means," said Steele, "I would not have you quit this spot; and I assure you there is nothing unfair or self interested in my motives."

"Oh, I dare say not; but as my Lord's good will is enough for me, I don't need your help. May be you will find a little of mine useful to you before long."

Seeing him determined not to listen, Steele was obliged to leave off; secretly praying that the prejudices of his companion might be removed, and his ear opened to wholesome reproof.

Shortly after this unsuccessful attempt of Steele's, he became so seriously ill, in consequence of a severe cold, that he could not leave his bed. Hardy exerted himself to the utmost in his partner's absence, hoping to prove that he could alone accomplish all the required task; and when his Lordship saw what progress was made, he expressed perfect satisfaction.

Hardy mentioned the illness of Steele in a way that showed how little regret he felt at the circumstance: adding his readiness to undertake the superintendence of what remained to be done.

His Lordship asked when he had seen Steele?

"Not since he was here, my Lord."

"What! is he not your neighbour?"

"He is, please your Lordship: but I have little reason to rejoice in that. When he came here I was in prosperous trade, and comfortably supporting my family: but this stranger by his

wheeling, flattering ways, drew the best of my customers from me, and injured me so much that I have been in very great distress for some time past."

"And had your employers no other cause for discontinuing to deal with you?"

"None, my Lord. I have always borne the character of an industrious, and I hope, an honest man. As to my work, your Lordship will please to judge by what is before you."

His Lordship then said, "has any quarrel taken place between you and Steele?"

"No, my Lord; if he has given himself some airs, it is no more than might be expected after such sudden success; and I am not quarrelsome."

"Did any one tell you that he endeavoured to injure you?"

"His conduct speaks for itself, my Lord."

"It does indeed," said the young nobleman, thoughtfully; then after a pause he added, "I have heard a very different account of this matter, Hardy. I was told that your want of punctuality and neglect of your employers, had be-

come quite insupportable : that Steele's conduct being the very reverse, he was therefore preferred : that he has always behaved to you with liberality and christian kindness ; and that many of your old friends would employ you, if you would fulfil the promises that you are so ready to make. Is this true ?”

“Your Lordship knows, that when I had all the custom of the country, I could not do every one's work as fast as he required it.”

“Yet, by your own account, Steele has now that extensive custom : but I hear of no complaints concerning him.”

Hardy was silent, and wished the conversation at an end : his Lordship went on.

“I must tell you, Hardy, that in consequence of these reports, I determined to employ Steele, and sent for him : he immediately requested that the preference might be given to you. I objected ; he pleaded your large family, your industry, ability, and so forth. I consented to employ you with him ; he assured me that you were competent to undertake the whole alone ; and it was not until I threatened to send for a man

from another place, and pass you both by, that he agreed to my terms."

Hardy felt exceedingly confused and ashamed, he recollected his boasts to Steele, which the young man must have known to be so grossly false. "A lying lip," thought he, "is indeed but for a moment."

His Lordship continued, "I think your sick comrade now deserves some attention from you. Do not let him know that I have mentioned these circumstances; but consider whether you are not far more blameable in this case than you wish to believe yourself: and add not to other faults that of unmerited ill-will against a fair and generous competitor. There is a depth of iniquity in the human heart, which God alone can enable us to discover. I fear you have not sought His help in the task of examining yourself. Delay it no longer, for these seeming trifles are the sparks by which an unquenchable flame may be kindled to consume you." His Lordship departed, and Hardy remained under no very enviable feelings.

To avoid visiting Steele was now impossible,

unless he could make up his mind to offend the young nobleman, and to confirm all the unfavourable reports respecting himself: on the other hand, he felt more shy than ever of Steele; since he must appear so very contemptible in his eyes, from his vain and ridiculous boasting. As he proceeded in the evening to his neighbour's abode, these things crowded upon his mind, and the longer he considered them, the more was he puzzled to account for Steele's conduct, in pleading for him with the young nobleman so strongly. "Surely," thought he, "this strange fellow could not do it to recommend himself by a seeming act of generosity: he has custom enough, it is true; but if he offended my Lord, he would lose half of it. Did he really suppose my interest there was so great, that I could cast him out, if he got into favour without my help? It is a difficult matter to understand: either he must be the most cunning, or the most foolish young man that ever I met with."

It never entered Hardy's mind to account for Steele's conduct on the simple Christian principle of loving his neighbour as himself, and doing

unto others as he wished them to do unto him ; though Hardy knew that these things were commanded in the Bible. Had he seen any one acting against the laws of the land, he would have been ready enough to deliver him up to justice, but keeping God's law, was to him an unaccountable piece of folly ; nor did he seem aware that judgment must overtake those who break it.

Arriving at Steele's cottage, and desiring to see him, he was immediately shown into his room, and cordially welcomed by the sick man. "This is kind, indeed, neighbour," said Steele, stretching out his hand, "take a seat, and let me hear how you are going on."

Hardy had much rough good nature in his disposition, and was really sorry to see the young man so very much altered ; he sat down by him, and replied, "nay, let me first hear how you go on ; for I am afraid you are very ill indeed."

"I am rather better," said Steele, "but have had a severe attack of fever."

"It was a bad time, too, to fall sick, comrade."

"It was as the Lord saw right, Hardy. He chuses times and seasons better than we could

do ; and like a loving father, he sends chastisement when we need it : if it came not till we desired it, we should have but little, I believe."

"Why that is true ; and it must be a comfort to make such sensible reflections when one is laid up, at a busy and gainful time."

"How do you go on at the castle, Hardy ?"

"Pretty well ; the young Lord was there to-day, and seemed quite satisfied."

"He is an excellent young man," said Steele.

"Yes, he seems well enough ; but is it not odd for a nobleman like him to do what his father's steward would be a more fit person to manage ?"

"It seems so to many, but I have heard that he takes every opportunity of studying the characters even of the very poorest, that he may better know how to supply their wants, both temporal and spiritual."

"What do you mean by spiritual wants ?" asked Hardy. Steele paused ; he seemed at that moment to be praying, and so, no doubt, he was, for help in answering a question so important : and before he could well reply, the clergyman entered.

After kindly speaking to Steele, he turned to Hardy, and expressed great satisfaction at seeing him there.

"Now," said Steele, "I will ask Mr. Norton to answer your last question."

"No, no," replied Hardy, confused, "don't trouble him with such nonsense."

"Speak out," said Mr. Norton, who knew that no nonsense would interest Steele at such a moment: the question was immediately stated to him.

"A most important inquiry, my friends," said the old clergyman. "Sit down, Hardy, and with the Lord's help, I will endeavour to answer it, in some measure; tell me what you conceive to be our chief bodily wants?"

After some consideration, Hardy replied, "air to breathe, food to eat, clothes to wear, and a shelter from the weather."

"Right; and under these heads we may also arrange our spiritual necessities.

"You know it is said, 'the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became

a living soul.' The life thus bestowed was twofold ; that natural existence which we enjoy in common with all animals, and the spiritual life with which man alone, of all creatures on the earth was gifted. It was the power and the will to love and serve God, and to enjoy communion with him in prayer and praise, ascending from the inmost heart. When Adam disobeyed by eating of the forbidden tree, he incurred the penalty, 'in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die ;' this spiritual life was extinguished by sin, and eternal death was the sentence under which Adam laid himself and all his posterity.

"Now God, by giving His own Son to suffer in the flesh for our sins, opened a way of escape from this terrible doom. The believer in Jesus Christ is raised from the state of death in which his soul lies until quickened by divine grace ; and by the power of his Redeemer, he is raised to walk in newness of life."

"You mean at the resurrection, Sir ?" said Hardy.

"No : the resurrection of the body is an event

that shall happen to all; I speak of the new birth; without which, our Saviour says, a man cannot see the kingdom of God. He who while living, partakes not in this spiritual resurrection, shall indeed be raised up at the last day; but it must be to shame and everlasting contempt. So you see, Hardy, we want breath, a new existence, and power to continue it, for our souls no less than for our bodies."

"It seems so, indeed, Sir; but all this is very new to me."

"Surely I have told you the same thing from the pulpit, times without number."

"Perhaps you have, Sir; but I confess I did not understand it as I now do."

"The next thing we want," said Mr. Norton, "is 'food to eat,' food that a man may eat of, and live for ever. I have told you that it is by the death of Jesus Christ alone, we can recover the life of the soul which Adam lost: He who gives us a new being, must also support it: the means by which he does this, are His written word, His appointed ordinances and sacraments; and above all, His own flesh and blood."

"Please to explain that, Sir."

"By the flesh and blood of our blessed Lord, is understood His incarnation—His appearing in a mortal body to suffer for our sins. On this great mystery of 'God manifest in the flesh,' we must feed by faith; we must make it our own by receiving Him as given for us, and see that He dwell in us, or we have no part in His salvation."

"But, Sir," said Hardy, "how can I know that Christ dwells in me?"

"By the fruits of the Spirit which will be produced from such a root; by feeling that you hate sin, love holiness, and are zealous that God should be glorified in your body and your spirit, which are His: by finding your sinful inclinations weakened, and your endeavours after true piety strengthened, in answer to the persevering prayer that the Lord teaches his children to live in. You will love all mankind for his sake, particularly those whom you know to love Him; you will rejoice to do good unto all men, especially unto them of the household of faith."

Hardy looked down, shook his head impa-

tiently, and it was plain he could not find the original of this picture within.

"I must be more brief in noticing what remains," said Mr. Norton. "We need 'clothing and shelter:' in our natural state the soul is as naked as the body, and all we can do to render it otherwise, is but half hiding it under 'filthy rags,' that can never find admittance to God's presence. We need a better righteousness than we can furnish; and he who feeds, must also clothe the soul in raiment clean and white, such as He can look upon with complacency. For shelter—alas! what a fearful storm of wrath must burst on the defenceless head of the impenitent sinner! Let us haste to the Rock where alone we can find a refuge and defence. Jesus Christ is that rock, that sure foundation, on which we may build a house that shall stand the shock of the wind and the waters, and endure for ever and ever."

After having kneeled down to pray beside the sick man's bed, Mr. Norton left the house. To Hardy all was strange, and so new, that he seemed to have entered into a different world; but he was not inclined to talk, nor did Steele

urge him to do so: after a few kind words he took his leave.

Mr. Norton was lingering near the house, and as Hardy passed, he said "Hardy, read your Bible; pray to God to enlighten your understanding; and search into these things of which you confess yourself so ignorant; for on them depends your salvation."

Returning home, Hardy had very little to say; the recollection of what he had heard made him feel unsettled and uncomfortable. At one time he was inclined actually to get his Bible, and begin to read the New Testament with attention—but he did not immediately, neither did he pray. Like a morning cloud did all the good impressions that he had received melt away; and he rose the next day with a determination to be more friendly to Steele, but not puzzle himself any farther about things that were very suitable for a sick bed, but, as he foolishly and wickedly reasoned, quite out of season with a man in perfect health, who had his way to make, and a family to provide for, in the world.

Desiring his wife to call and see Steele before

dinner, he went to the castle as usual. At night his wife told him, with breathless eagerness, that the strangest thing had happened ; for, while she was sitting with Steele, the young nobleman himself had come into his room. "Impossible!" exclaimed Hardy. "Nay; it is true : and Steele was so confounded at it, that I thought he never would have got voice to speak : so his Lordship turned to me, and asked me how he did. I am sure I courtseyed down to the ground, and told his honour that I had not been long there ; but had come by my husband's desire. Then Steele spoke out and said "Hardy is her husband ; and he is very attentive to me."

"Did Steele say that?"

"Indeed did he ; and told how you sat by him yesterday, and listened to Mr. Norton's discourses."

"What did his Lordship say?"

"Why, he smiled as sweet as mortal man could do ; and spoke to Steele about the Lord Jesus Christ, till it seemed to me that I am no better than a heathen to think so little of Him who died for sinners."

"Aye, wife, they have an odd way of talking ; better not perplex ourselves with such things we have the children to look after."

"Yes ; and his Lordship spoke of them and how they must be brought up either for heaven or hell ; till I was scared at the charge that he said God laid upon me."

"You see it all comes to that ; it makes us uncomfortable , think no more of it."

"But I shall, though. If they say true, we are quite in the wrong, and the children, poor things ? will go on in our way ; so I am resolved to consider it for their sakes."

"Do as you like : you will soon be tired."

"I shall pray to God not to let me be tired, if I am to get any good by going on. I fancy you would gain little if you were to lay down your tools as soon as you felt fatigued, and leave off work."

Hardy laughed ; but the remark was not altogether lost upon him.

"Is it not strange," said he, "that a nobleman should visit a poor carpenter ?"

"Steele said something like that, and he di

rectly answered, 'if you call that condescending, let us turn our view to the grace of Him, the Lord of heaven, who deigned to become poor for our sakes.' Those were his words: I shall never forget them."

"Pho!" said Hardy, "you are taken with the young Lord's fine manners and title, so you listen to him: you never minded these things when old Mr. Norton said them."

"True enough, George, I never minded them before, the more is my sin and sorrow; but I will mind them now, and follow the good advice that I have got."

She did so; she read her Bible with prayer, and received the blessing promised to those who search the Scriptures, that they may do the will of God.

In the mean time, Steele recovered slowly; Hardy worked diligently, and received a handsome recompense when the noble family took possession of the castle. Several, also, of the neighbouring gentlemen again employed him, being very much urged by Steele to do so; and it was impossible for Hardy to deny, even in

thought, that the young man really acted from a most benevolent and kind feeling towards him. they became very intimate, and at length, at the recommendation of the young nobleman, entered into a partnership, on condition that Hardy made no promises but what his friend would sanction.

Not long after while cutting a board carelessly Hardy got a dreadful wound in the leg, which laid him up, in a state of great suffering, totally incapable of any exertion. This occurred too, at the commencement of a severe winter, and just after the young nobleman whose health was very delicate, had set out on a tour through the southern parts of France and Italy.

Steele worked early and late; he supported the family, and was to them as a brother born for adversity. While all his leisure time was passed in more earnestly pressing on the attention of his suffering partner those truths which he had so wantonly banished from his thoughts in the hour of prosperity, as only suited to a season of affliction; but Hardy found that comfort was not to be had at his own pleasure.

A deep gloom overspread his mind; he felt conscious of being a very great sinner, but at the same time was unable to mourn for his sin as he ought to do. In vain were the penitential Psalms, and similar passages of Scripture read to him: in vain were confessions poured forth by those who knew the language of a contrite heart: Hardy repeated after them whatever they said, but secretly felt he was mocking God with words in which his spirit bore no part. Believing that he could be sorry whenever he pleased, the unhappy man had paid no regard to the declaration that Jesus Christ is exalted to give repentance, as well as remission of sins; and not seeking that gift in due time, he was left to feel that godly sorrow can only be excited through the influence of the Holy Spirit, who like the wind, which bloweth where it listeth, is free in his operations and not to be made obedient to the caprice of men.

One day, when Hardy's wife was trying to speak comfort to him, he suddenly exclaimed, "I wish I was a Roman Catholic!" In the evening she repeated the remark to Steele, who asked

him the reason of so strange a wish ; " Because," said Hardy, " I could then confess to a priest, say some prayers, do some penances, pay for a mass or two, and have my mind set at rest by the absolution of the church."

" You are like a man wandering in a dangerous wood," said Steele, " with very little light glimmering to direct him, but enough to show a path that will lead out of this maze ; and because the light does not increase so fast as you desire, you want to be struck blind, and fall into a pit rather than make any further attempt to extricate yourself."

" How do you make that out ?"

" Why," replied Steele, " you are in a state of sin, and in great peril of eternal death ; but the light of the Gospel shines sufficiently to show you the misery and danger, and the same light reveals a way of escape : you want to turn from this sure, though seemingly distant deliverance ; to avoid the task of seeking, and praying and waiting the Lord's time ; and you would delude your soul with the inventions of man which

cannot profit, but only render you insensible to the destruction to which they lead."

"But," said Hardy, "if I really believed in these things, and acted to the best of my knowledge in doing them, surely I should be saved?"

"Surely not," said Steele; "we are not left to grope about, and find for ourselves a way to heaven. The one way, provided by the Lord, is revealed to us. If we do not seek to know and to follow the directions which He has given us in his word, on our own heads is the sin, and the inevitable destruction that must follow it. Suppose you had to pass a very deep and rapid river, over which one safe bridge was built by the king of the country; who sent forth a proclamation that no one else should attempt to make a passage across the river, and that the bridge he had laid would bear them safely to the opposite side—suppose you must pass this stream, and, while one man read to you the proclamation, another said, 'I will lay a plank from side to side, and you can walk over it:' then if you turned away from the king's law, and ventured upon the rotten plank, and were swept to destruction in the

sight of those who were safely walking over the bridge, would you deserve their pity?"

"Indeed," replied Hardy, "I should not be such a fool as to make the experiment."

"Well—the bridge is the path of life appointed for those who would escape eternal ruin: the Bible is the proclamation that declares it alone to be the safe road, and forbids all others. The devil is he who tempts you to disregard God's word, and trust yourself to such planks as he can lay, that he may rejoice in your fall."

"Now suppose," Hardy replied again, "that a man puts the proclamation in his pocket, and will not let me read it?"

"Then he is a rebel and traitor to his sovereign; and, as such, unworthy of your regard. Besides, there are copies of the Bible to be had in every place, thanks be to God: and who has a right to debar you from using what your King, the King of heaven, gives, and commands you to attend to, as the revelation of his will? whether we read it or not, we shall be judged by it at last."

"Then you consider the Roman Catholic religion one of the planks."

"Every thing," replied Steele, "that differs from the way pointed out by the Lord, is a delusion of Satan; and that the Roman Catholic religion does so differ, we have proof enough, even in the conduct of its teachers who dread the introduction of the Bible among their people, as the first step to their leaving that Church. While God clearly reveals and declares that there is no other salvation than that brought to us by the Gospel—no other name under heaven given among men whereby we may be saved, but that of his Son—the Roman Catholic religion bids us rely on our own works, prayers, penances, and the merits and intercession of fellow-sinners, who had no help in themselves when living, and who certainly cannot help us now they are dead. God says, 'cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord;' yet you will find the church of Rome selling pardons for the most dreadful departures from God's law, and teaching its followers that to eat meat, when

their Priest command them to eat fish, is a more deadly sin than to blaspheme the name of Christ, and to do all manner of evil to his people. Our Roman Catholic brethren have indeed forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. But whatever you call yourself, if you are seeking salvation by any other means than by the blood and merits of Jesus Christ alone, you are venturing upon a path that must end in destruction."

"Neighbour," said Hardy, "I will put another case; suppose the bridge is shut, and I cannot get over it?"

"That is supposing that God can change, which is impossible. The entrance of this bridge is narrow, but none were ever refused admittance who sought, and asked, and knocked, according to the command of our Saviour. If you turn away in impatience, it is a proof you do not believe that no other passage can be found."

Hardy was silent; he could not deny the truth of what his friend said, and felt that to be told by men he was in the right path would no more

avail him, than being told that his leg was healed would enable him to get up and walk, if it was untrue. Compelled therefore, to look to God alone for help and peace, he prayed incessantly for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and he listened eagerly to every consolation held forth in the Gospel.

One evening, Steele came in with a sum of money, the payment of a long and hard piece of work which he had done; he gave it all to Mrs. Hardy, reserving only his subscription to the Bible Society, which nothing ever induced him to encroach upon.

Hardy saw the gold given to his wife; tears stood in his eyes, as he held out his hand to his generous friend. "I have been thinking Steele," said he, "that only for your noble conduct to me, I should now be perishing with all these about me; starving, from the consequences of my sinful habit of telling falsehoods."

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not all consumed for our sins," replied Steele. "I was the means of injuring your trade, though I hope

it was over-ruled to your true benefit; and it is right that I should make some amends."

"Aye, but, Steele, I am sure the people would not have borne with me much longer; some other workmen would have been sent for by them, and the punishment would have fallen without one drop of kindness to sweeten it."

"Then ought you not to be most deeply thankful to the Lord?"

"Yes: I wish I was as I ought to be! But tell me, Steele, how you escaped the temptation that almost all tradesman fall into?"

"Every state," replied Steele, "has its own particular snares; and every man a sin that besets him more constantly than others.—Knowing this, I was enabled to watch against what I had reason to apprehend most danger from. I always wished to appear a moral character, even before I thought any thing of religion as the main business of life, and pride kept me from telling an untruth; but this pride itself is sin in God's sight; and he who indulges one evil feeling at the expense of another, obtains no victory over himself; it is only wearing the

same badge on a different coat. The change in our general appearance does not render us less the servants of sin ; nor prevent our receiving its sure wages, eternal death."

"But how did you get over your pride?" asked Hardy. "So far as that is conquered," replied Steele, "the work is the work of God ; not mine. He enabled me to see myself a sinner, exposed to his wrath ; and in trying to overcome my evil propensities, I found so much to make me abhor myself, and to humble me entirely at the foot of the cross, where alone I could look for pardon and acceptance, that it was not possible for such a self-convicted offender to continue proud. When I understood to what my iniquities had exposed the Lamb of God ; and considered the mockery, the anguish, and shameful death endured by Him, to save such as me from perdition, I was abased in the very dust of the earth, and could only cry, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' Encouraged to believe that in Him I have indeed found mercy, and endeavouring to persevere in a life of holiness, I feel myself so constantly opposed

by the snares into which I am often too ready to fall, and by daily experience so convinced, 'that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,' that it is enough just to look at the law of God, and then at myself, to preserve me free from pride in my miserable attempts to be a faithful servant. If we would oftener consider what duties we have neglected, as well as what actual sins we have committed, it would help to keep us and self-righteousness at a wide distance."

"But you kept your rule of telling the truth, though you could no longer glory in it," observed Mrs. Hardy.

"Yes: feeling my own weakness, I relied more and more upon the strength of the Lord; and strove after what was meet to adorn the doctrine which I profess. Indeed, since I have renounced self-dependence, and lived more by faith, I must say worldly temptations have not so much power over me, as I feared they would always have, I believe the Lord has given me a new heart, because I can say His law is my delight: and because I hate sin, as that which

He hates, and which dishonours Him, as well as being what would destroy my soul."

"I used to think," said Hardy, "that, when you sat reading your Bible, and refused to join in the idle follies of those about you, and saved your money for religious societies, that you were choosing a very hard path to heaven, and punishing yourself on earth that you might be sure of getting there at last."

Steele smiled: "if you knew what pleasure the Bible affords me, you would own I was seeking my own gratification, instead of punishing myself, when I meditate upon its pages. As to the amusements of which you talk, they are worse than nothing to me; they steal from me the treasures of time, for the use of which I must give account; and they unfit me for the enjoyment of the truest pleasures—communion with God in His word, and in prayer. This would be the case if there was nothing of what the world calls harm in them: but judge you whether it is so, when you consider to how much mischief they lead, profane and immoral conversation, drinking, quarrelling, and every

excess : besides squandering the money that we ought to expend on our families. When I have been compelled to look on a party of dissipated mechanics, thus employed during their leisure, or still worse, during the Sunday, I have sadly asked myself if these could be a part of that great multitude, who shall stand before the throne of God, in white robes, with palms in their hands—if these were the disciples of Christ, a peculiar people, purified, and zealous of good works, whose names are written in the book of life ; and, alas ! we know that all whose names are not written there, shall be cast into the lake of fire.”

“Steele,” said Hardy, “I never thought thus on these things before.”

“Because you have not known either God or yourself. The Bible, which showed them to me in so awful a light, is revealing them also to you ; and its lessons, I trust, will be blessed to the saving of your soul. Can you wonder that I delight to add my little contribution to the stock out of which God’s book, the written message of his mercy to fallen man is sent

forth into so many poor habitations, 'to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death : and to guide their feet into the way of peace.' "

"It is against this God that I have been singing all my life," said Hardy ; "and what a base unthankful wretch am I !" He now loathed himself for his iniquities ; he grieved over the rebellion of his heart, and, drawn by the cords of love, followed the Saviour, who had not only redeemed his soul from death, but crowned him with such tender mercies, and loving kindness, by means the most unexpected and providential.

Hardy now could pour forth the confessions of a soul deeply troubled to Him who invites the sinners approach : he found consolation in every page of Scripture, and rejoiced in the assurance of pardon and everlasting salvation. The tranquil state of his mind promoted his bodily health ; and though wasted and weakened by long confinement, he got about again and worked very hard, to release his benevolent friend from the burden of supporting the family.

One day Hardy was returning from a gentleman's house, where he had been to receive some orders, when at a little distance before him he saw one whom he immediately knew to be the young nobieman. He ran forward, then drew back, and again impelled by feelings which he could not overcome, placed himself in his sight, bowing low, but not able at once to speak.

"Hardy!" exclaimed his Lordship, "is it you? How are you going on?"

Hardy replied, that by the blessing of God, he was doing well in every respect.

"That includes a great deal," observed his Lordship, "are you aware of it?"

"Yes, my Lord: it includes all the mercies granted through Jesus Christ to the vilest of sinners."

"Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift, you rejoice me, Hardy. Had Steele any part in this good work?"

Hardy replied by relating, with the highest animation, the whole of Steele's generous conduct to him.

His Lordship was much moved by the recital ; but he only observed, "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

But he did not forget the two carpenters ; finding on inquiry that Hardy was become in every respect a changed character, that his adherence to truth and sincerity was as marked as his deviations had formerly been ; and that no man could be more patient, steady, and industrious, or bring up his children more carefully in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, he made it his care to watch over the interests of the family, and befriended them materially.

Often was Hardy painfully reminded of his former evil courses ; and frequent occasion had he to mourn over the remaining corruptions of a nature that he could never wholly subdue. As might be expected, those who before laughed at, or excused his transgressions, when he did evil without restraint, now watched for every little slip in his daily conduct, and brought it forward as a heavy charge against the religion which he professed. Lamenting one day to Steele that it was so, the latter replied, "we always find it

thus; and surely these mistaken friends pay a great and justly merited, though perhaps unintentional, tribute to the perfect purity of the faith to which they object. While we lived in the ways of the world, all our vices were looked on as matters of course, and called by the gentlest names. Now, that we profess to be led by the Spirit of God, the slightest appearance of evil, a hasty word, or a mistaken opinion, is laid hold of as a proof that we do not truly belong to that number among whom we enrol ourselves. Nay, our former sins, once so lightly regarded, are now called up to mind, and exhibited as proofs that our present profession must be hypocrisy. Do such seek to prove that Christian purity is unattainable, or do they hope to excuse themselves, in their gross transgressions, by the comparative falling short of others? Alas! they little know how deeply we afflict ourselves for what they so harshly censure: or how anxiously we press towards the mark for the prize of our high calling, in proportion as we feel our spiritual enemies active in casting hindrances and spreading snares in our way.

Weak, wavering, and fearful in ourselves, we are obliged to petition more earnestly for Divine help, and to feel that 'in the Lord alone we have righteousness and strength.' "

Reader, have you, like Hardy, cast God's righteous law behind you, and allowed yourself in what your conscience condemns ?

If so, I beseech you, pause for a moment, and reflect what must be the end of these things. Satan, who is called by our Lord the prince of this world, may allure you with the expectation of those advantages to which you now attach great importance ; but in the hour of death, at the day of judgment, what will they avail you ? When the earth, with all its works is burnt up, where is the fruit, the profit of those things, whereof, even now, you must be often in your hearts ashamed ? The fruits of them you must reap, to your eternal confusion, for the wages of sin is death and those wages will undoubtedly be paid, if you obtain not deliverance from the curse of the law, which now speaks condemnation against you. Mercy is freely offered in Christ Jesus ; but delay not to accept it ; such

presumptuous indifference will only add to the weight of your fatal sentence: you have been told of one who, by signal mercies, was led to lay hold of the hope set before him in the gospel; but consider how very many are swept off into darkness and despair, while neglecting this great salvation. While you live in sin, you are the enemy of God, and confederate with Satan. Can you rest satisfied in so awful a state? I hope not. Listen to the voice of gracious invitation: "let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the LORD, for He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon;" "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and was sent to bless us, by turning away every one of us from our iniquities, and enabling us to glorify His Father, by bearing much fruit of righteousness and true holiness all the days of our life.

O bless the Lord, my soul, and own
What wond'rous mercy He hath shown;
Not as our sins demand he gives;
Behold, the pardon'd rebel lives!

Then let me shun the hateful road,
Where walk the impious foes of God ;
Abhor the place where sinners meet,
Nor loiter near the scorner's seat.

A band there is, by Jesus prized,
By Satan fear'd, by man despised,
Who turn them from terrestrial toys,
To meditate on endless joys.

"Come thou with us," they cry, "and view
The glorious land we journey to ;
To us and ours that land is given,
A heritage reserved in heaven.

"Come, and partake the gift divine ;
Believe and all its wealth is thine."
Bid me, O Lord, the call obey,
And join them in the heavenward way.

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WAY TO DO GOOD.



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WAY TO DO GOOD.

"How untidy this room is!" said William to his sister, as he walked in, with his book under his arm.

"That cannot be helped," answered Sophia, "for we have been cutting out frocks and pinafores for the children of the poor, after Mamma's gowns were made, and my frocks. These are the scraps that fell about; but I will soon gather them up." She did so, crushing them in her hand, and thrusting all together into her apron, which she held up for the purpose. When all was collected, Sophia was going out of the room, but her Mamma called her back, and inquired what she was about.

"Only going to throw away this rubbish, Mamma," said Sophia.

"What, my dear!" said Mrs. Smith; "and is that all the profit that you have gained from our morning's work and conversation?"

"Why, Mamma, surely there is nothing worth saving among these odds and ends. The very biggest is not more than three inches square. What use would you put it to?"

"A great many uses, Sophia. Now pick out each bit of the size that you have mentioned; separate the different patterns; and then roll up together all the very small scraps in one parcel. And, while you are doing it, repeat to me the various ways in which we have avoided wasting any of these articles, as yet."

Sophia, very cheerfully, sat down; and began to sort the little pieces, talking as she went on. "First, Mamma, at the shop, when we went to choose two morning gowns for you, and some frocks for me and Fanny, you persuaded me to give up having a deep flounce to my frock, so that a cheap remnant was enough, instead of cutting into a more expensive piece. And you gave me the money that was saved by it to put into my poor's-box."

"That was a good exchange," said William. "I cannot think that any body looks the more respectable for frills and flounces; particularly when one sees so many little delicate children ill-clothed, in their mother's arms, in every street."

"True, brother," answered Sophia. "Then the tradesman wanted Mamma to give a higher price for a fashionable new pattern, but she took another, just as neat and pretty, only not so new; and, as it came cheaper, she got a larger quantity for the same money. There was no remnant for Fanny; and she, being larger than I, followed Mamma's example, and so had something more than the quantity that was reckoned enough for her two frocks. To be sure, Fanny and I wanted our things to be made by a smart dress-maker; but Mamma convinced us what a wasteful thing it would be to pay for a fashion. So we agreed to cut them out at home, and let the industrious young woman, who works so hard to maintain her poor family, have the making of them."

"I like that too," said her brother; "for

fashions change so fast, that I see the ladies who follow them soon become ashamed of a good gown ; and must either have it altered, or buy another, before it is half worn, just to avoid being out of the fashion."

"Mamma said much the same," remarked Sophia ; "and so we went to work this morning and made the room very untidy, to be sure. First, Mamma cut out her own gowns ; and took plenty of time to consider, and contrive how she might shape them so as to spare the materials ; and when they were done, we found enough for two little frocks, and a pinafore. Fanny agreed not to have her sleeves very full as the fashion is : and she also spared a tippet by that means, to the pretty little frock that was left for a baby. My remnant left only a few bits ; but then I have two shillings to lay out, that I may also have something to give."

"Some people would call this being very stingy," said William : "but, as I know that Papa helps the religious and charitable societies every year according to what he has saved, I am always so glad to think that any waste is

avoided. For I know that he will not stint the poor who are around us, whatever he denies himself."

While William spoke, he was turning over the leaves of his copy-book, to find one, which he tore out, and threw under the fire-place.

"Softly, William," said Mrs. Smith.—
"What are you doing?"

"Oh! I blotted a page, Mamma, and my writing-master advised me to take it out."

"But did he advise you to throw it away?"

"It is good for nothing," said William, taking it up, and shewing it to his mother: who told him to fold it, and put it into his pocket: adding, "What you were saying was so proper, that it is a pity your deeds should seem to contradict your words. Your dear Papa's conduct is worthy to be imitated, as well as commended."

Sophia had now finished her parcels; and, smiling, shewed them to her Mamma.

"This is as it should be, my dear; and now put them into your small basket, with your two shillings. Fanny is coming down stairs; and

we will take our walk, to leave these savings among our poor neighbours. I dare say that William will like to accompany us."

The party was soon ready to set off. Mrs. Smith took Fanny's arm, and William indulged Sophia with a run along the pretty lane that led to the village. There is more of miserable poverty in towns than in the country, and of course, more work for those who can pity the distressed: but even in the most comfortable village, let the circumstances of the cottagers be carefully inquired into, and the rich will be astonished to find how valuable, among the poor, would be even a very small part of what they daily waste and destroy. The frocks, the pinafore, and the tippet, were received with great thankfulness by the mothers of some sweet little children. One, in particular, said that, having now a second neat frock, she could send her youngest boy to the infant school which a good lady had just established. "Those schools, Ma'am, are a great blessing to the poor," she said: "for we can safely leave the little ones there, instead of keeping the bigger children

idle at home to look after them, while we go out to work. Besides, they learn a great deal of good there ; and are much better behaved, when at home ”

Mrs. Smith asked this poor woman, if she ever patched the children's clothes.

“ Surely, Ma'am ; or they would last no time at all ”—and she shewed a frock very neatly mended with small bits, as near its own pattern as could be found. Sophia was glad to have her little bundle of scraps to match the frock, and the woman took them joyfully. Mrs. Smith now asked whether there was any sick poor near ; and was told that the child of a neighbour was in the last stage of a decline ; the parents being in very great distress for almost every thing. “ Your two shillings will be of use there Sophia,” said Mrs. Smith ; and they went to the house.

The first thing that struck Sophia, in this miserable place, was the value of scraps ; for the poor sick child was covered with a piece of patchwork, very clumsily joined together, to be sure ; but still making a little coverlid for the

narrow bed. Every thing bespoke great poverty ; and the mother's face shewed that she had been shedding many tears. In answer to the inquiries of her visitors, she said that her eldest daughter was at service some miles off, in a great town ; and that, if she knew of their condition, she might be able to send a little help : adding, that her son, who had been at a charity school, was going to write to her.

"And how do you maintain yourselves?" said Mrs. Smith.

"My husband, Ma'am, is a laborer ; and gets work by the day, where he can find it. The last summer was too wet to afford much employ : and he took a bad cold, that made him so weak and ill, as to be hardly fit for harvest work, However, he exerts himself, and is now at his labor. I have been used to go out to nurse among the neighbours ; but, since my poor child got so ill, I can hardly bear to leave him. Nor, indeed, has there been any work for me lately. My biggest boy earns a few pence, by taking out meat for the butcher now and then ; and sometimes his master gives him a morsel, to make a

sup of broth for poor Tommy"—and she looked at the wasted figure of her child.

Mrs. Smith approached the little bed, and asked, "Do you think you shall get better, my dear?"

"No, Ma'am : I am going to die?"

"And are you prepared for such a great change?"

The boy looked up at her with a smiling countenance—"It is Jesus Christ that has prepared a place for me, Ma'am."

"Yes," said his mother, wiping her eyes, "that is what he is always talking about. One would suppose he had seen his Saviour, he seems to know him so well."

William repeated,

"E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die."

The little boy waited till he had finished, and immediately went on,

"Then, in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy power to save,

When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave."

"Dear boy," said Fanny, "where did you learn all these blessed things?"

"At Sunday School, Miss. Oh! and I can repeat a great many chapters and hymns. Will you hear some?"

"Not now," said Mrs. Smith, "you are too weak;" for she perceived the cough ready to come on.

"I am boiling a little broth for him," said his mother. "He has had nothing to-day."

The other boy now came in, with a little ink in a broken-cup; and said, "I couldn't get the paper, mother: he was out; and no body else could give me any."

The mother took a halfpenny from the chimney-piece, and, as she did it, looked sorrowfully at the sick child: then, giving it to the lad, bade him go for a sheet of paper; adding, "unless they would sell half a sheet."

"Oh," said Willam, "if half a sheet will do, I can supply you: for this is only blotted on one side, and will be out of sight when folded"—he

drew out the leaf of his copy-book ; and one would have thought it had been a bank-note, by the smile of pleasure that shone on the countenance of the little party. The sick boy said, "Then I *shall* have it, mother."

"Have what ?" asked William.

"Oh, Sir," replied the elder boy, "poor Tommy was wanting sadly to have a big onion in his broth, it makes such a relish. Mother had only that halfpenny ; and, if I had got a sheet of paper from our old school-master, Tommy might have the onion : but else it must go for paper. So now I'll run for the onion," and away he scampered.

The young people had all known what it was, when sick to fancy that they could relish some particular thing ; and they were greatly affected to think how nearly the poor child had been disappointed of such a trifle.

"Who would have thought," said William, "that a scrap of blotted paper would be of such a value !"

"Ah ! Sir," answered the poor woman, "there are few things that we do not contrive to make

some use of. We are often brought to our last half-penny, and beyond it ; and a smaller matter than you would think of will help a poor family at a pinch. We reared a good bed of onions this spring ; but distress forced us to sell even them ; and now the season is quite gone, we couldn't get one without paying for it."

"Now tell me," said Sophia, taking out her little bundle of shreds, "what use would you put these to?"

"Oh, Miss, the rag-dealers buy such bits as those by the pound, and sell them to the paper-makers. Many a three pence have I made by them ; and often when it was sadly wanted. Thank you kindly, Miss," she added, as Sophia put them into her hand, "and may you never learn the value of such things in the way that I have learnt it in!"

Mrs. Smith was satisfied that Sophia could not better lay out her two shillings, than in the service of this poor family, which she did ; and on their way home, the young people thanked their dear Mamma for giving them such a lesson and example, determining never to waste a sin-

gle thing ; because, if it was not useful to others it might prevent expense to themselves, and the money so saved was always valuable to the poor. Their Mamma advised them to read what the apostle Paul says to the Corinthians : " Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him," 1 Cor. xvi. 2 ; and proposed that, at the end of a month, they should compare their notes, and see how much each might have to lay out for the poor. At the same time, she cautioned them not to lessen their usual charities ; as, in that case, they would wrong some in order to assist others ; and this would be an offence to the Lord, who says, " I hate robbery for burnt-offering ;" while he also tells us, " Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost."

" And this He said," continued Mrs. Smith, " after satisfying the wants of all around him ; shewing us that prudent and careful management of what is to be spared, not a stinting in what is needed, is the rule by which we should walk. Begin and carry on your work in prayer, that the Lord may direct you rightly, and keep you

humble in the endeavour to serve His poor : for, if Satan can but make you proud of your charity, he knows very well that you will be benefitting the bodies of others, at the expense of ruining your own souls."

Oh for the tender heart that feels
Another's want and grief!
Oh for the willing hand, that deals
A bountiful relief!

How rich was He, the Lord of grace,
Whom cherubim adore!
And yet, for our rebellious race,
What poverty he bore.

The Christian name, then, can I bear,
And Christ my Lord confess,
If I my portion do not share
With brethren in distress?

God knows his gifts, their whole amount
He marks how they are spent;
He will demand a strict account,
For every talent lent.

Fanny, William, and Sophia had come to an agreement that, in order to avoid any danger of "envyings" or "emulations," they would put

into one common box whatever was saved by each, and take the whole sum to their dear Mamma, at the end of the month. They knew that she would then be preparing her bounty of winter clothing and firing, and blankets for the poor ; and their only wish was to help her as much as possible, all together, not to get separately commended according to what they might have been able to save. "For," said Fanny, "one of us may have more opportunity than another of putting something by ; and it would be hardly fair to get praised for what was not of our own procuring." Now, as Fanny herself was the one who might be pretty sure of getting most, her brother and sister loved her the better for this proposal : and they each prayed to be directed and assisted in what they felt to be a great duty, not any merit.

On the first of November, the three young people made their appearance before their mother, bringing the box, which bore this suitable inscription on its lid : "Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we

should be able to offer so willingly after this sort ? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." 1 Chron. xxix. 13. 14. The box being emptied upon their mother's table, she desired them to consider the text which they had put upon it, and to kneel down, to beseech the Lord to accept their little offering : confessing that from him alone came the power and the will to devote even so small a portion of His many gifts to the service of his poor. This being done, they counted the money ; but I shall not tell you how much there was, because I desire that each of you my dear readers, will do *what you can* ; not making the deeds of others, but your own ability, the measure of your bounty. Remember the two mites of the poor widow, you that have little ; and you that have much, think on the costly offerings of King Solomon. God has not now a temple on earth, made with hands, like that of Jerusalem, into which all gifts can be poured ; but Jesus Christ made our nature His temple, by causing the fulness of the Godhead to dwell in a mortal form : and whatsoever you do unto His poor members, is indeed

an acceptable gift brought into the temple of the Lord.

"Now Fanny," said Mrs. Smith, "let us hear what methods of saving you have discovered."

"Why Mamma, it is wonderful how many ways I have often overlooked from not thinking enough about it. I now perceive that we can be very frugal in saving money to purchase what will gratify our taste and pride, and that is a wrong principle: I hope to act according to a higher and holier principle. I have gained at least the price of half a quire of good paper, by not being ashamed to send notes or make envelopes of what would be called shabby scraps, when writing to my own friends; I also determined not to give up so much time to unnecessary correspondence, and by that means, am beginning to save both in paper and postage, and have more leisure to work for the poor. You know, Mamma, that I don't mean to make any more fancy articles, as they are called, for the ladies' sales: because, the gentleman who was lately here, convinced me that it was taking the bread out of the mouths of many poor

industrious, friendless young girls : but I have learned some useful things, such as cementing broken ware, and cutting out all sorts of clothing, and so on, by which I can employ myself both at home, and in teaching the cottagers about us. There are plenty of poor aged or crippled people, who can neither work for themselves nor afford to pay others. I have not forgotten our shopping, a month since ; and by that plan of reckoning what may be put by, I have saved not a little both in money and articles. A rag-bag is a thing that we had never thought about ; and you would be surprised to see our fine collection of pieces, indeed we have begged among our friends for what few people think of saving ; and we often find among them a bit large enough for a poor babe's cap, or to look very respectable in such a patchwork counterpane as poor little Tommy is covered with. When we really have nothing else to do, we make a little patchwork ourselves, to encourage the children in the cottages to begin. A small bit ready made to their hand, often induces them to go on, till they take quite a pleasure in the work. These are our

savings in goods,"—and she brought forward a pretty large basket.

"Fanny has just finished her report," said William, "and now my turn comes. My savings have been chiefly in the way of avoiding waste, for I could not earn money as the young ladies do. However, I have begged a bit of ground from Papa on which I mean to raise some onions and herbs, and lay them by for the winter. Then, I have left off throwing away my pens after once mending, and am determined to make them last. I have also got quite a collection of waste paper, or what I should have called so a few weeks since. Out of some savings I have bought a store of packthread, and some large netting needles, and have taught several old people and children in the cottages about us, to make cabbage nets, and nets for wall fruit, which will employ them in the winter evenings, and they can sell them to good advantage next year. I think that I am also rather more careful of my clothes, since I have found out the value of a little saving; and I have checked myself when wishing for some useless things, in which I often

laid out my pocket money ; and this has enabled me to put some shillings into the box. My visits to Tommy, who is so delighted when I go to read a little for him, have kept me mindful how the poor are obliged to struggle, and to do without many things that we think quite necessary ; and I never come home from his cottage without feeling how guilty I have been all my life, and still am, in wasting so much. I have had many thoughts Mamma, about the unprofitable servant, who hid the talent in the napkin : and since you told us that every thing which we have, is lent on purpose to be improved to the glory of God, I have prayed for grace to employ my time, health, and all that I have learned, as well as my little stock of money, in the service of Him who entrusts them to me, that I may not be condemned at last, with the unprofitable servant, who was cast into outer darkness, where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth. So that though as yet I have *done* but little, I hope I have *learned* much ; and I shall endeavour to go on learning the useful lesson of

gathering up the fragments, that nothing may be lost."

"I am glad to hear all this," said Mrs. Smith; "and now what report has my little Sophy to make?"

"Oh, Mamma," said Sophia, "I have so little to tell, that I am ashamed of myself. I have often thrown away whole hours upon a doll's dress, and excused myself for it by fancying that it would help me to get a knack, as they call it, at making my own clothes: but one day Papa, seeing me very much pleased with a fine frock and pink ribbands, that I had put upon my doll, told me that I was wishing in my heart to be as fine myself. I did not think so then; but when I came to consider a little, certainly I had been fancying to myself that when I grew up, I would like such a tasty dress. Papa also asked me, if it was not as agreeable to be sewing a good cotton frock for a poor ill-clothed baby: and when he saw that I had put away my doll, he took me to the draper's, and bought me several little remnants of printed cotton—Fanny cut them out: and you will find them in the basket, with some

caps, made out of bits that were in the rag-bag ; and a baby's shirt, made of some cambric given me for my doll—the wooden creature—oh, I'll never work for her again ! Well—there are also small bits of patchwork that I helped Fanny to put together. As for the box, I did what I could, but it was not much : however, as William said we are learning, Mamma ; and that is something."

"I hope you are indeed learning, my dear children," said their Mamma ; "but, always guard against any pride or vain-glory that you might be tempted to feel, when comparing your present carefulness with former waste. *That* was a great sin ; and if you are avoiding it now, give all the glory to God, who has mercifully put it in your hearts to forsake an evil way ; and remember that you will soon fall back into careless and cruel neglect, if you do not obtain His continual help by prayer. Your Papa has noticed your late conduct ; and, as it has also been a saving to us in many things, I believe that you will find he has put something into your box too, for an encouragement. Oh, my dears ! how

many a poor person whom we cannot discover or relieve, will be shivering with cold, and pinched with hunger, in dwellings that can hardly keep out the storm from their aching limbs, while we are sitting round our blazing fire, well clad, well fed, and within such walls as can defy the tempest! We never can do enough when we do our utmost, the word must still be "abound more and more." We ought first to seek out the Lord's own poor, those who believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him before men, and bear their many afflictions as a cross appointed by Him—for so it is written, "let us do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith."

And next let us think of all the aged, who can no longer work, nor keep up the little warmth that should remain in their poor old limbs. And the parents of young families, who perhaps want food. What can be more dreadful than the distress of a tender mother, who sees her children wasting away, and hears them cry for a little nourishment, which a few pence would purchase; while people continually pass her door, whose

expensive dresses, she compares with the nakedness of her hungry babes : and is thus led to envy and to covet—adding sin to her sorrow. The sick need many comforts, which those in health can very well do without ; but what comfort can the sick poor man command, whose illness has put a stop to his daily earnings, and deprived him of the little support that he had ? Very often too, the sufferer is a stranger in the place where sickness overtakes him ; and there is no one to sooth his pain, or to speak to him of the blessed consolations which religion affords. Yet, how many Christians pass unthinkingly by these abodes of misery, nor ever stop to enquire what the house of mourning may contain. How many of the rich and gay turn from the humble appeal of its famishing inmates, and hasten on in pursuit of their own vain pleasures, thinking, that in so doing they commit no offence against God or their fellow-creatures. Satan blinds the minds of worldly people, or they could not be so ignorant of what the Giver of all good requires of them. The world is a scene of great suffering : and who would take a party to dance and sing in an

hospital among the maimed and dying? Yet much worse is their conduct, who squander their money and time on idle amusements, while so many of their fellow sinners perish for lack of a morsel of bread!"

Oh, what a scene is this on earth
To God who views it from His throne,
Frowning He looks on thoughtless mirth,
That pities not its fellow's groan.
He sees the pride of rich array,
When pomp and wealth go sweeping past
While many a form of kindred clay
Unclothed, unsheltered, meets the blast.
He sees the wasteful table spread,
Where none their craving taste deny,
Though mothers vainly ask for bread,
To hush the starving infant's cry.
Along life's path, where'er I go,
Let me remember, God looks down;
And never may my bosom know
The terrors of the Saviour's frown!



THE NESTLINGS.



THE NESTLINGS.

A TRUE STORY.

I am going to tell you something, my little Henry, which is very sad, and very true. Look yonder into the middle of that large garden. You see an old pump standing there, with a spout, and a handle, but there is no water in it. For many a year the well has been choked up, or in some way dried ; but the pump stands as before.

The top of the pump, you must know, lifts up, like the lid of a box ; and two summers ago, when straying in the garden, I happened to raise the top, to see what works were within. And truly I saw a work, far more curious than all the pump-makers whom I know, could have produced.

“What was it?”

A bird's nest beautifully formed, and lodged in a corner, very near the top. There were five delicate little eggs in it; and I supposed it must have been there a long while, for I could not see how a bird should then get into the place. However, I would not feel them, to try if they were warm, as nothing distresses a poor bird more than to find that its eggs have been touched—some birds will even forsake their nest altogether if the eggs are meddled with.

I softly closed the lid, and went behind those trees to watch. After a little while I was much pleased to see a pretty bird alight on one of the bushes opposite the pump, and, having looked carefully around, fly into the spout, to nestle upon the little round eggs; then I was very glad that I had not touched them.

It was not long before the shells disappeared, and a parcel of little yellow, naked birds put up their open mouths whenever I peeped into the old pump, which I took care only to do when I knew that they were left alone.

“I hope that you fed the little birds?”

No I left that to their parents, because they knew better than I, what was good for them ; but I became very fond of the tiny nestlings, and watched as their soft feathers began to grow. When they were nearly fledged, I left the place for a few days ; and on coming back, I lost no time in going to the old pump. I was not much surprised to find the nest quite empty ; and I remarked to a friend, " The young birds are all gone."

" They are all killed, poor things," said she.

I felt very sorry, and much displeased ; and asked who could have been so cruel as to kill the harmless nestlings. She told me that Frisk, the old cat, had placed himself opposite to the pump concealed in the Strawberry bed, and slyly watching. The old birds did not fear him, as they were too strong on the wing to be caught ; and flew up out of his reach. But, it was supposed, they dared not bring the young ones out on account of the danger they would be in. However, one day, when the parents were absent, the strongest, or boldest, or most impatient of the brood got out by himself—and, alas !

cruel Frisk sprang upon him in a moment, and carried him off, to eat at his leisure.

“The naughty cat!”

If I had been at home, Henry, I should have raised the lid of the pump, so far as to allow the birds to get out when they liked, and fly to the apple tree just by. But nobody thought of that, it seems; and one after another, all the poor little unsuspecting things coming out of the spout, were snatched up by Frisk, and eaten.

“If I can catch that Frisk, I will give him a good beating, so I will.”

No, Henry, you ought not to do that. To be sure, you will not catch old Frisk, for he has long been buried in yonder corner of the garden; but you must not blame an animal, much less punish it, for doing what is its nature to do. In a wild state, cats can only live by catching mice, birds, and such small creatures; and they will do the same, in any condition. It was quite natural for Frisk to catch and to eat those little birds; and perhaps, it was better for the poor nestlings, than if they had flown a little way, and fallen into the hands of cruel boys, who are,

I am sorry to say, far worse enemies to little birds than cats, or any other animals ; because they do not catch them to satisfy their hunger, but to please their idle fancy—sometimes only for the dreadfully wicked purpose of tormenting the innocent and helpless creatures, though it is hard to believe that such wanton cruelty could be found among human beings, if we did not continually see it. I hope my dear little Henry will never follow such cruel examples. You know that God hates cruelty.

“I would not hurt any thing, indeed,” said Henry, “but were you not very sorry for the poor birds?”

Yes, I was : however, it gave me a very useful lesson ; and now I seldom walk past the old pump, or look at it from my window, but I have serious thoughts, that ought to do me good. And you, my Henry, are just like those poor little birds, in the nest.

“Why ? Do you think that a cat will eat me ? I should not like that.”

A cat will not eat you, Henry, but an enemy, far worse than a cat, is watching to seize you.

Now listen to me : those birds were very weak, helpless things, and so are you, as far as regards doing any thing for your own benefit. You are placed here in the world, that you may grow, and use all the strength that God has given you, in his service. You ought, after a while, to be flying up to heaven, beyond the blue sky, into the happy home of blessed spirits. This strong, fierce, cruel enemy is Satan ; and he wants to prevent your going to heaven, and to make you his prey ; and such is your state by nature, that whenever you do leave the world in this unregenerate state, you must needs go, like the birds which went out at the spout, right into the power of this enemy who is watching to seize you.

“ Why must I do so ? ” said Henry.

Because you are a sinner ; and all who die, that is, go out of the world, sinners, are the lawful prey of Satan. You see what a dreadful case you would be in, if you were exactly like those poor birds ; for they had no other way by which to go. But I told you that if I had been at home, I would have raised the pump-lid a little ;

and then the birds could have flown upwards and be safe. Now I want you to understand that just in this way God has prepared a path of safety for you.

“How has he done so?”

By sending his own dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death for our sins, God has opened a way of escape for every poor sinner who is willing to use it. You can no more get up towards heaven by any work of your own, Henry, than one of those very weak, tender little birds could have lifted up the lid of the pump. You cannot possibly escape, but by making use of the mercy that God has shewn you. That is, by believing in the Lord Jesus, and coming to God through him alone. You know, he calls himself “the door,” in the tenth chapter of St. John’s gospel : and just such a door is he, as I would have opened for the poor birds ; that is, a door by which creatures that cannot possibly help themselves, may get away from danger, and be safe for ever.

But still, Henry, if I had opened the lid, the

birds would have been nothing the better, had they chosen to go down through the spout, and so to fall into the cat's claws. You see, there would have been two ways; and they must have pleased themselves as to which they would have chosen to take.

"I should think, to be sure, if they went the wrong way, they would deserve to be eaten for being so foolish and ungrateful, when you had opened the door for them."

Why, you know, my dear little boy, the birds would not have been to blame, because the cat had concealed himself; and they, having never yet seen any living creature but their own tender parents, and us, who used to peep in, but never alarm them, they would hardly suppose any thing would be there to hurt them. But as to you, if *you* go the wrong way, Henry, and fall into the power of Satan, you will be as guilty as miserable; for you are warned of your danger—you know that if you don't make use of the mercy which God has shewn you, in giving his dear Son to be your Saviour, you must be lost for ever.

"I am sure," said Henry, "that I will not go the wrong way ; because I know that Satan will get me if I do."

Ah, Henry, nobody would resolve to go the wrong way, I should think : but it would seem far more easy and safe to a little bird to go down through a sloping passage, just beyond which it could see the firm ground, than to throw itself on its weak wings, in the open air, with only the lofty blue sky overhead, and nothing to take hold on,—so it seems more easy to us to go on in our own way, and either to make no attempt at all to get to heaven, satisfied with such pleasures as earth can give, or else to fancy that we can get there by some other plan than that of simply believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and trusting ourselves to him alone.

You often hear of FAITH, Henry, and how by faith alone, we can please God, or get to heaven ; but perhaps you hardly know what faith is. Now, suppose that the little birds, had seen the open way, and could have understood me, advising them to escape by it, and had said to themselves, we don't know *how* we are to be supported

up in that sky, as we can see nothing to stand upon ; but let us do as we are told, and go on by that way, depending on the friend who has opened it that we may be safe—supposing that they had then spread their wings, and thrown themselves into the air (for they were very well fledged indeed) you know the air would have borne them up ; and God had given them a power which they had not before tried, to support themselves in it : and the apple tree, which they could not see till they were out of the pump, was so very near that it might have afforded to them a resting-place, after their first short flight, and then they would have become bolder to try another and a longer trip. Do you understand this, Henry ?

“ Yes, quite well, as to the birds.”

Then, mind me, such is faith. God shews you that he has opened a way for you to reach heaven by ; but you have only his word for it. You cannot *see* any thing with your own eyes, to give you confidence. You can only believe, that what God has said, he will surely perform ; and that the way so mercifully opened to you by

the sufferings of your dear Redeemer, will truly bring you to his everlasting home. Then, by the help of the Holy Spirit, who teaches you to believe thus, you resolve to trust him to the uttermost. You throw yourself upon the faithfulness of God, as a bird throws itself into the air; and he who has given you grace to do this, will go on helping you. Though you can see nothing, "for we walk by faith, not by sight," you will feel that the everlasting arms of God are upholding you: and having gone on so, for a little while, he will send you some help that you did not expect: he will give you some resting-place, for a while; from whence to look down on the enemies that you have escaped; to see how wise and how merciful his plan of saving you was; and to gather fresh courage, fresh faith, for another occasion of glorifying God, by trusting your soul, and your whole self to him alone.

"Suppose that the birds had flown into the apple tree, could not the cat have run up, and caught them?"

To be sure, the cat could soon have run up the tree, Henry. But you must remember that

the birds would then have learned that their safety lay in their wings ; and when they saw the cat coming, away into the air again ! and they would be in no more danger. *Cats cannot fly.* This helps to shew you the value of faith. So long as you are trusting to any thing in this world to shelter you, or to your own wisdom, goodness, or strength to protect you, you are like a silly bird running away from a cat, upon the hard ground. One spring will bring the enemy upon you, and you are lost. But when you trust entirely to the Lord Jesus, and go on in faith, believing that none else can possibly help you, then you are like a bird mounting into the sky, where no cat can follow. Now Satan knows all this so well, that he will place every bait in your way, to tempt you from looking to the Lord Jesus. But pray my dear child, that you may be kept from his snares ; and make your escape by that Door, which God has set open before you, and which, thanks to his ever lasting mercy none can shut.









